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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Praxis would like to acknowledge the extensive contributions of the team members and Steering Committee on this project. The study team members played a variety of roles from detailed writing and analysis, to review and ongoing contributions. In particular, Jim Creighton, Bruce Fraser and Desmond Connor provided some of their own materials which have been directly used or modified in

the development of this manual.

Praxis would also like to thank the interdepartmental steering committee established under the auspices of the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office (FEARO).

Special thanks go to the Steering Committee Chairperson, Dr. Gordon Beanlands, from FEARO.

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This manual was produced on a
Macintosh SE with a Laser Printer.
Pagemaker page layout and Word 3
provided the software to complete the
publication. Over 50 percent of the text
was modemed from remote locations
across North America.

PREFACE

How to Use Volume Two

The Manual on Public Involvement uses several sources of information:

- ❑ A questionnaire, distributed to all line managers of federal departments represented on the Steering Committee, asked the type of public involvement approaches used to date, and those techniques and methods for which further guidance was desired.
- ❑ A review of manuals and current literature on public involvement.
- ❑ A review of ten case studies of public involvement in the initial planning phases of small scale projects. These case studies are representative of all regions of Canada.
- ❑ The experience of noted experts each of whom has worked for many years in the public involvement field.

One of the findings of the survey was that, while data collection techniques are commonly employed, greater information was desired on consultative techniques. To effectively use such techniques, it is impor-

tant to understand the decision making context in which public involvement occurs, and the public involvement process itself. The manual has been written to meet this goal. Readers are encouraged to review the material in Volumes One and Two before attempting to employ any of the techniques described in Volume Three.

The manual has been illustrated with examples drawn from the case studies to clarify and support the points being made. As well, lessons from practitioners experienced with public involvement are passed on through "The Practitioners Speak" - vignettes which appear from time to time in each chapter. At the conclusion of each Chapter, "Final Thoughts from the Practitioners" provides a summary of key points and hints to the user.

The survey indicated a wide diversity in the experience base of managers respecting public involvement. While some departments have been using public involvement for many years, other departmental representatives have little experience with public involvement.

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The broad social and demographic trends which began in the '70s have brought about fundamental shifts in public attitudes and values which sustain the demands for participation.

Agencies which have initiated public involvement for the first time often find that requiring the preparation of a public involvement plan is the single most important thing they can do to get public involvement institutionalized into the organizations.

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The real choice is whether public agencies learn to do public involvement well, or are forced into it, resisting at every turn. The disadvantage of resistance is that this is painfully obvious, and there is no improved relationship built with a public which sees you as consulting only under duress.

Because of this range, the manual has been developed assuming little or no previous experience with public involvement on the part of the reader. As a consequence, some of the material may be very familiar to some readers. Please refer to later sections of the manual if this is the case.

For individuals in departments or agencies of the federal government, the team hopes that this manual will assist you in "getting started" on the road to public involvement. However, remember that a manual cannot provide you with the experience base. You should contact those resource people in other departments who have had the experience. FEARO is a good place to locate contacts in other departments who may be able to assist you and provide you with pointers on public involvement based on their experience.

Finally, this volume is structured around a framework for planning public involvement programs which was initially identified in Volume One and presented here again in Chapter One.

In addition, a series of "quotable quotes" and other key factors have been highlighted where appropriate. These quotes along with the "Practitioners" quotes should be read. As a minimum, they will provide the reader with an excellent overview of the public involvement planning process.

CHAPTER 1

THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

Volume One outlined the requirements for a public involvement process as including five distinct phases, summarized in Figure 1. These phases include a number of detailed steps which are presented in Figure 2.

A recent project, developed by Environment Canada under the leadership of the Niagara Institute, developed a set of principles and protocols for public consultation. These principles and protocols have been used in the design of a number of major consultation programs under the auspices of Environment Canada and strongly support the general thrust taken in this manual. Although the principles are not structured into a process like that described in this manual, they spell out the

assumptions underlying an effective public involvement program and for these reasons are reprinted in this section:

- ☐ the recognition that all parties in the process have important contributions to make;
- ☐ the need for access to a common information base;
- ☐ the need for consultation on the process itself;
- ☐ the need for a clear statement of issues and objectives;
- ☐ the view that consensus building is possible, but it requires flexibility, compromise, and sufficient time and resources.

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Much of the original resistance to consultation is a fear of the unknown, a fear of what could happen. But a track record of nearly fifteen years shows that most of the fears of public involvement are unjustified, and also shows that the benefits of public involvement for agencies are very tangible.

Figure 1 Phases of Public Involvement

Phase 1. Early Consultation

Early "reconnaissance" is required to determine the major public issues which could be raised by a project proposal, the likely level of public interest, the most likely participants and the key individuals who will represent them.

Phase 2. Initial Planning

Five detailed preparatory steps lead to the development of a public involvement action plan. The steps include: identifying the agency's decision making process, identifying publics, identifying special characteristics of the situation, writing specific objectives, and determining information exchange requirements.

Phase 3. Development of an Action Plan

Action planning begins with choice of public involvement methods keyed to the previous phases. The Action Plan includes establishment of intra-agency communications, commitment of resources and the scheduling of activities essential to conducting the public involvement methods selected.

Phase 4. Implement the Plan

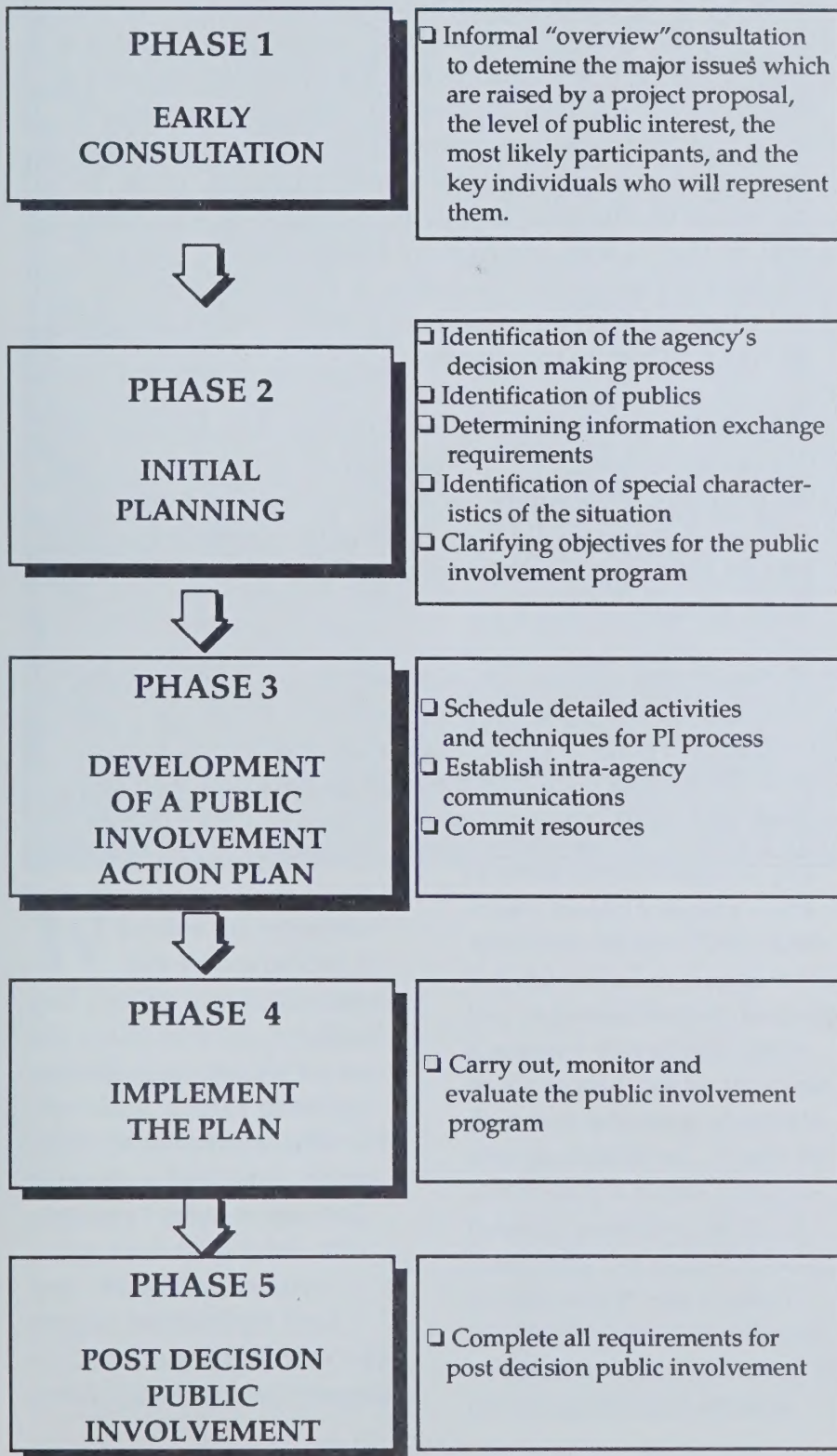
Evaluation of the public involvement process proceeds in conjunction with monitoring of the progress of the agency's project. Evaluation of the results of public involvement is carried out according to guidelines which emphasize both participant satisfaction with the process and ultimate effect on the project.

Phase 5. Post Decision Public Involvement

Often, decision makers assume that public involvement is finished when the decision is made. This is not the case; continued involvement is important for many of the reasons early public involvement is useful. After the decision, the public can be involved in further planning, implementation, mitigation, compensation and evaluation of the project, especially with those aspects of the project affecting the public. Also, if the project does not proceed, it is very important to tell the public that this situation exists and the circumstances that led to the situation.

Figure 2

Steps in Developing and Implementing a Public Involvement Program



*The crucial factor in designing public involvement programs is to be sure that you are very clear on **why** you are going to the public at a particular point in your decision making process. Design your public involvement programs so that public comment is as necessary at key decision points as your engineering, environmental, social or economic data.*

The Practitioners Speak.....

Never underestimate the value of just sitting down and talking to people in small groups, outside of the formal meetings. I remember one series of workshops we'd designed. I'd done my best to design some small group exercises which would give everybody a chance to speak, and really open up communication. One group which was suspicious of our motives handed out instructions as people came into the workshops telling them how to manipulate the workshop exercises to get a predetermined result. By the end of the meeting anyone who disagreed with them felt like they'd been run over by a steam roller. To top it off, after the workshop the leader of the group came up and asked if I wanted to go have a beer. What I wanted to do was pop him in the chops.

A few days later I calmed down, though, and had the beer. We agreed to hold a couple of sessions with his group and the planning team where we'd just sit down and talk. We learned a lot and so did they. One of the things we learned was to have those kinds of informal exchanges with all the major groups.

When we ran another series of workshops a few months later the same people showed up, but this time they were cooperative and supportive of giving everybody a fair shot. The difference was they felt understood, and some trust was built between us.

CHAPTER 2

EARLY CONSULTATION

Early consultation with the public who are interested in, or directly affected by, a proposed project is an excellent investment. Decision making processes benefit if the first phase is a "reconnaissance" of public views. It is wise to scan the broad range of issues before public statements are made and positions have been taken which must later be retracted or defended. This can save a great deal of time and effort in everything from the preparation of initial information and selection of public involvement methods to the costs if the project is cancelled.

INFORMAL CONSULTATION

Whether the opportunity arises before formal project announcements are made or after, informal consultation should be undertaken. Direct personal visits or telephone calls will provide a firsthand appreciation of what interested parties actually think and feel. Meeting the same people for the first time across a meeting floor or at a public hearing may present

too great a barrier to the development of the interpersonal trust which is such a critical ingredient of successful public involvement programs. This is the time to get out of the office, get your boots muddy and hear "unvarnished" opinion.

Even if you don't have all the information assembled or analyzed for a project, it is preferable to touch base with the various publics now, rather than to wait. Let them know your schedule for obtaining the information and studies, so that if you have to say, "I don't know" in response to a query, it will be credible.

An example of the benefits of early consultation is provided by the Calgary Area Aviation Master Plan. During the initial meetings with key organizations it became apparent that quick agreement would not be possible due to conflicting interests and perspectives. It was realized that a more comprehensive planning process involving the public would be necessary. As a result, the participants developed a common understanding of the situation and of each

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PHASE 1

Case Study:
Calgary Area Aviation
Master Plan.

PHASE 1

Recent books on excellent managers say they do a lot of "walking around" out where things are happening. Excellent managers use this as a way of "sensing" what's really going on in their organization, instead of having it filtered through other people. Think of early consultation with the public as "walking around" with the public. You're trying to get a feel of what's really happening. You can't get a feel for an issue if you just walk around and talk to people who agree with the agency. That's of no more use to you than getting all your management data from a "Yes-man." If you only get out and "walk-around" when there's a crisis brewing, then just your being out there talking to people changes the dynamic. But if you're out "walking around" with the public on a regular basis, then you are seen as a normal part of the territory, and you can sense any changes which may be harbingers of future problems.

others needs. Ultimately, the committee attained consensus on the final recommendation. This would not have been possible had the extended public involvement program not been undertaken.

IDENTIFYING MAJOR ISSUES

During informal consultation it is possible to explore the issues that may be engendered by the proposed project. This early discussion allows you to sort out those issues which are likely to cause real public concern from those which are hypothetical. Early warnings can be transmitted to the project proponent staff to see if modifications can be made before controversy is precipitated. The complexity of the project and the issues perceived by the public can set the tone for project announcements and for the internal agency preparations for public involvement.

ESTIMATING LEVEL OF INTEREST

Technical professionals usually make their own preliminary estimate of the likelihood of negative impacts of their proposed project. These estimates may depend upon extensive research or may result from

qualified opinion. It is always disconcerting for professionals to have their assessment of risk challenged by public perceptions which can be at great variance with their own.

Public perceptions of risk can be volatile. Media coverage, personal experience, competing professional views, rumors and inflammatory comment may influence public perceptions more than the evidence held within the agency. Talking to the public directly can help assess the emotional climate in which your project will be received, and the kind of information that may be required about it from the moment it is announced.

Do not assume that issues which you identify will remain the same or that new issues will not arise during the process. Change is the name of the game in development projects. **It is essential that you monitor the issues over time so that you remain on top of the situation.** This process has become known as issues management and is discussed further in Appendix One.

When estimating the level of interest, it is well to remember that many public interest organizations are networked. You may face per-

ceptions of risk and concern about issues from people experienced with projects from far distant places that could be real challenges but may also bear only superficial resemblance to your project.

A presentation technique to display critical issues to senior decision-makers has been developed and can be found in Appendix Two in this volume.

IDENTIFYING KEY PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS

A concerted attempt to ensure that key people are identified is crucial. Interested or affected parties who are left out of the information flow may interpret this as deliberate and not an oversight on your part. Asking key people to check your list and refer you to others is a good way of making sure that no one is missed.

In identifying organizations it is useful to determine whether they have perma-

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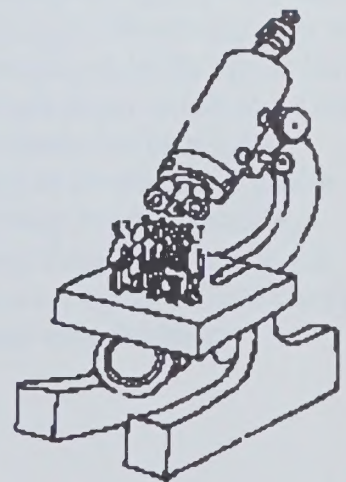
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PHASE 1

The Practitioners Speak.....

One mistake I used to make a lot was underestimating public concern because I was convinced from my own technical knowledge that there was no real problem. Then I would choose a public involvement approach at the superficial end of the scale, thinking that there was no issue. Well, of course, this would be interpreted as cavalier disregard by the public and I would take a lot of flak. I've learned that **the methods that you choose have to bear the heat that the project generates**, even if you think that the heat is unwarranted.

I have seen projects run into trouble because they failed to see that a predecessor had sensitized the public negatively. I remember one logging proposal in a public watershed that would have been controversial at the best of times, but it followed a successful battle to exclude uranium mining from the same watershed. . .



PHASE 1

Highly contentious issues cannot be resolved in a short-term public involvement program. Don't expect too much. A longer term process of consultation to gradually build consensus is required.

nent staff or are dependent on volunteers. The ability of organizations to respond to enquiry or to generate comment varies greatly with meeting schedules and organizational form. Enough must be known about the communications capacity of organizations so that you do not interpret logistic limitations as a lack of interest.

Also, contact with leaders of organizations which meet infrequently is not necessarily contact with the membership. Other organizations may have communication patterns which differ from that within your agency.

Final Thoughts from the Practitioners....

- ☐ Don't be afraid to informally consult with the public very early on in the process and take a reconnaissance of the issues which may be affecting a project.
- ☐ Remember, do not forget to identify "publics" within, as well as outside of, your organization. It is very embarrassing to find your own staff at odds with you when you go into the community.
- ☐ Sort out those issues likely to cause real public concern from those which are hypothetical.
- ☐ Do not assume that the issues which you identify will remain the same or that new issues will not arise.

CHAPTER 3

IDENTIFYING THE AGENCY'S DECISION MAKING PROCESS

The second phase of the public involvement planning process is the "initial planning" – undertaking the research and thought necessary to prepare an action plan. This initial planning process has five steps:

- ❑ identifying the agency's decision making process;
- ❑ identifying the publics;
- ❑ identifying special characteristics of the situation;
- ❑ clarifying objectives for the public involvement program;
- ❑ determining information exchange requirements.

This chapter discusses the first step, identifying the decision making process.

Each agency has decision making processes unique to its own mandate and jurisdiction. Departments concerned with parks, highways, airports, waste facilities or mines share some common patterns but have evolved practices which are strictly internal. Members of the public cannot be ex-

pected to know what these practices are, where they can intervene or what right they have to call for intervention at any given stage of a decision process.

When an agency sets out to develop a public involvement program, it should make sure that the call for public participation is linked to accessible steps in a clearly articulated decision making sequence.

THE MANDATE FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Sometimes public involvement is formally mandated by legislation, policy or regulation. For example, the guidelines order governing the Environmental Assessment and Review Process (EARP) formally describes the decision making process and the points for public review. In this case, there is an established entry point for the public, and at least one method of public involvement (the public hearing) is fixed. In the case of formal hearings, public involvement is constrained to fol-

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PHASE 2 - STEP 1

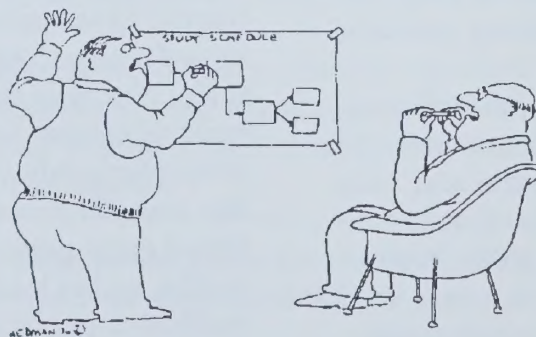
Agencies often have difficulty explaining decision making processes in simple language because the agency itself lacks clarity on the process, or is so enraptured by the details that people forget to talk about the fundamental principles behind the details. If you're having trouble explaining something to the public, use it as an opportunity to clarify your own thinking.

PHASE 2 - STEP 1

The Practitioners Speak.....

When I first started working with government agencies I kept hearing from people about how they couldn't do things because their bosses wouldn't let them. They weren't permitted to make decisions. Then I met their bosses and they told me how they couldn't make decisions without the permission of their bosses. Then I met the guys at the top and they told me all about how their hands were tied. One of the reasons they claimed their hands were tied is that their staff had made so many decisions that their options were very limited.

Everybody wants to be in on "the decision". But the truth is that there isn't any single point in time at which "the decision" is made. Big decisions are shaped by all the little decisions which went before them. Someone makes a decision about how the problem is defined. Someone else makes a decision about which alternatives are considered. Someone else makes a decision about the criteria used to evaluate the alternatives. Someone else determines how much flexibility there is in interpreting the law. Once a final choice is made someone else decides how the decision is to be implemented. Which is "the decision"? They're all important. That's a big reason why you need the public's involvement throughout the entire decision making process, and after the final decision when the implementation activities occur.



Where do you participate the public?

low a prescribed path that demands a structured approach both by agency managers and by members of the public.

In the case of less formal mandates for public involvement, the entry points are flexible and can be negotiated to fit local circumstances. The decision making processes at this level are often themselves flexible or at least have some room for managerial discretion in their application. Most agencies' legislative mandates do provide sufficient flexibility so that the public can be involved in a decision without contravening the mandate.

In practice, an agency might face situations which lie on a continuum between the strictly formal and the informal or which may involve both formal and informal requirements at different stages in the life of a project. Public involvement early in the design stage of a project allows for flexibility of methods. If public involvement is withheld until controversy is well established, there is a strong tendency for all parties to gravitate to the formal end of the spectrum.

Regardless of the degree of formality, the agency that invokes public involvement must provide the public

with an explicit statement of the decision making process in use. Failure to do so runs the risk of appearing to change the rules in mid-play when participants discover stages that managers appear to "manufacture" to suit their needs.

Flexibility of decision process is illustrated in the case of the Fort McKay Interface Committee, established by Alberta's Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB) as a forum in which a native community could discuss its concerns in a cooperative setting with industry and government. The committee had the mandate to discuss and debate upcoming proposals. However, if the community was not satisfied with the committee process, it could request a public hearing.

DEVELOPING DECISION SEQUENCE CHARTS

There is no substitute for an explicit sequence chart. Each decision can be divided into a sequence of steps which show the action to be taken, information elements upon which each stage is dependent, who is responsible, where the public may be included, and the implications of the decision. Each participant in a public

PHASE 2 - STEP 1

Case Study:
Fort McKay
Interface Committee

PHASE 2 - STEP 1

Case Study:
Fort McKay
Interface Committee

involvement process should possess a copy of the chart and it should be used to log the progress of events. This mechanism helps to keep public expectations realistically related to the agency's mandate, helps to communicate the process to senior managers or politicians, and helps to give structure to requests for budget and staff. Figure 3 presents the generic decision sequence charts for both formal and informal processes.

INVOLVEMENT AFFECTS THE PROCESS

Most decision making sequences established within an agency are developed to meet project timetables, cost imperatives and internal organizational requirements. They make sense to the professional

managers and become enshrined as "standard operating procedures". When the public enters the scene there is potential for friction and for change. Even time-honored processes may need to be rethought to accommodate determined publics. The willingness of agency management to adapt existing procedures may be taken by the public as evidence of good faith.

The case of Fort McKay shows the possibility of attaining win-win results if an agency is flexible. Alberta's ERCB, in an attempt to develop a new approach to resolving conflict at Fort McKay, spearheaded the establishment of a joint industry-government-community committee which subsequently played a major role in the review of an industry permit application, an

The Practitioners Speak....

I have run across agencies which have elaborate decision processes but no chart showing the standard sequence. When the public asks about the process, each manager explains the sequence differently from personal impressions or uses different terms, resulting in confusion of the public and embarrassment of the agency. Sometimes the preparation of a sequence chart has surprised the agency about how convoluted their own process has become and leads to useful streamlining, even before meeting with the public.

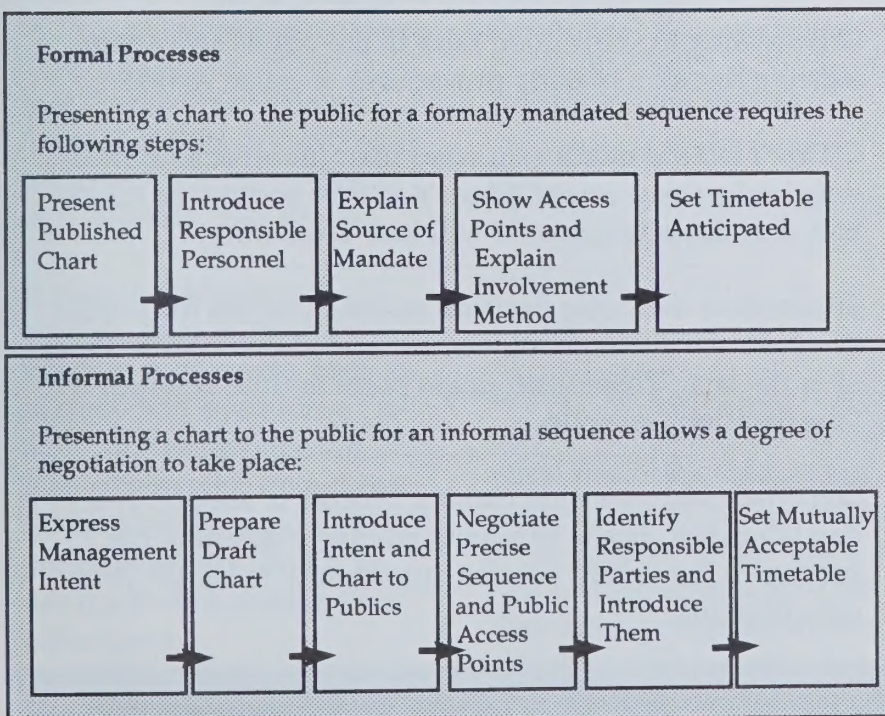
The Practitioners Speak.....

Decision making in the real world hardly ever follows a linear sequence. The pressure of events advances or retards a timetable, several steps are compressed into one or done simultaneously, flashes of insight cut through stages, or new parties to the process arrive on the scene demanding change. The value of having a charted sequence is that it acts as a framework on which to hang real events. Otherwise the unpredictable occurrences of reality look to the public like "the manipulation of a reluctant manager".

unusual step in the normal ERCB review process. The ERCB also assisted the Committee's operation by funding the services of experts.

As shown in this case study, flexibility provides agency management with the opportunity to develop public involvement programs specifically tailored to the needs of a particular project

Figure 3
Generic Decision Sequence Chart



PHASE 2 - STEP 1

You simply cannot make intelligent choices about what public involvement techniques you should use until you have a clear idea of what it is that you want to accomplish at each step of the decision making process.

PHASE 2 - STEP 1

When you design your decision making process you are making a statement about what matters to your decision makers. If your decision making process considers only the "tried and true" ways your agencies have dealt with problems in the past, that will be very clear to the public. If you value control more than visibility or credibility, that will also be visible. If you think some groups are more important to hear from than others, that will also be clear. Be sure, before you go to the public, that your decision making process expresses the same values that you are going to tell the public you care about. Otherwise, your process speaks louder than your words.

and the characteristics of the publics involved. In an impact assessment, public involvement at each step of

the generic decision making process could eliminate the need for formal public review.

The Practitioners Speak...

I've learned that one pitfall on project sequence charts is showing public involvement as but a brief interlude on the timetable leading inevitably towards project construction. The "engineer" has budgeted two weeks for public consultation and the language assumes assent on schedule. Cries of "tokenism" result and the process comes off the rails. **Most publics are very sensitive to signals of urgency that appear to limit a reasonable chance to intervene.**

Final Thoughts from the Practitioners.....

- ☐ Be aware that an effective public involvement process can eliminate the need for formal public review/public hearings.
- ☐ Be willing to show good faith in the public and adapt existing decision making procedures if called to do so.
- ☐ Don't tell the public you want their involvement, then only budget two weeks for it. You'll be accused of tokenism, and the whole project will lose credibility.
- ☐ Structure the entire decision making process for public involvement throughout, not just added onto the process, after the fact. There is no single point in time at which "the decision" is made.
- ☐ Explain your decision making process in simple, everyday language. If you're having trouble explaining the process to the public, use the opportunity to clarify your own thinking.

IDENTIFYING THE PUBLICS

The second step of the pre-planning phase is the identification of the publics. This chapter discusses factors influencing this step.

The public is not a single entity, a monolithic whole. Rather it is constantly shifting affiliations, interests, and alliances. There are many publics, rather than “the public”. These publics form in response to some perceived interest. People participate when they believe they are strongly affected and believe they can do something about it. They don’t participate when they believe they are not affected or can do nothing about it. One implication of this is that “the public” changes for each public involvement program, and grows larger as a decision gets closer.

If people intensely experience an impact, they are likely to participate, and, if so, they will exert more political or media pressure than others who do not feel as severely affected. **This is political reality, and it is not limited to public involvement.**

In fact, the “Silent Majority” is a myth. It does not exist because it rests on the false assumption that somehow, because people are silent, they are in agreement. Everyone makes choices about when to participate, and may be part of the vocal minority on one issue, and be a member of the “silent majority” on others. The membership of the silent majority and the vocal minority are changing constantly. One definition which encapsulates this concept is: the “silent majority is simply a group of currently disengaged minorities”.

REASONS FOR NON- PARTICIPATION

There are several reasons why people may not participate in public involvement:

❑ **They feel adequately represented by someone in the vocal minority.** Leaders of visible interest groups often serve as “surrogates” for a much larger group who feel they are represented by the activities of the surrogate. Many people belong to some

PHASE 2 - STEP 2

PHASE 2 - STEP 2



group in which they do little more than pay dues so that the group will represent their interests. In other cases, people may not pay dues or join a group, but are reassured by knowing that such a group is active.

❑ **People don't believe the impact justifies participation.** Everyone makes choices and sets priorities as to the activities in which they participate. Some people choose to participate in the daily tasks of earning a living and caring for family. Others participate actively in a number of issues. People involve themselves in those issues they believe have a significant impact on their lives. Remember, all citizens have the right to choose not to participate.

❑ **People are unaware they are affected by a decision.** If people are not told of the potential impact they may not participate because they don't realize they could be affected. When they discover this is untrue they may feel doubly betrayed - betrayed because of the impact, and betrayed because they weren't told about the impact before the decision was made.

❑ **People don't believe they can influence the decision.** Apathy is people's belief that no matter what they do they will have no influence on the outcome. Without well-defined methods by which people can influence a decision, only the best-organized interests are likely to participate. As an agency earns a track record in involving the public, its credibility is enhanced and people will feel more hopeful, less apathetic.

❑ **People believe that the decision is already made.** If the public believes that the decision has already been made, they may refuse to participate in the public involvement program, choosing other ways to make their concerns felt.

OBLIGATIONS TO THE PUBLIC

When people choose whether or not to participate, their decision is based on the amount of information they have about the impacts as well as their assessment of whether or not their participation will affect the decision. This - coupled with the dangers of decision making by small elites - creates obligations to the public which should be observed in planning and implementing public involvement programs.

❑ The federal agency has an obligation to provide information which informs the public of upcoming decisions and their potential consequences, so that people can decide on an informed basis whether or not to participate.

❑ The agency should inform the public how to participate if they choose to do so.

❑ Even if the numbers who choose to participate are small, the agency should be sure that it is hearing comments from all viewpoints, not just from a limited public such as "user groups".

❑ The agency should provide information and access to management to all interest groups, not just a limited few.

Once these obligations have been fulfilled, it is up to each individual to decide whether or not he or she wishes to participate.

In the Fraser River Estuary Management Program (FREMP), a major principle underlying the public involvement program is that of shared responsibility. The program took the initiative to foster awareness and information about the estuary and the program and was readily accessible to everyone interested. How-

ever, citizens and their public interest groups had to take responsibility to monitor FREMP and take some initiative to seek further information and present their views. FREMP did not try to send all its information to every resident of the estuary, but ensured there were ample windows for those interested to become informed and to be heard.

Guidelines For Working with the Public

Target the public for each issue. Targeting is the process of systematically analyzing which interests and groups have a probable interest in a given issue. Note that the degree to which people feel affected is a result of their subjective perception. People that agency staff think are directly affected may not be as interested as someone that, from the agency's perspective, is only peripherally involved.

It is not the purpose in "targeting" publics to exclude people or groups. Rather, the purpose of targeting the public is:

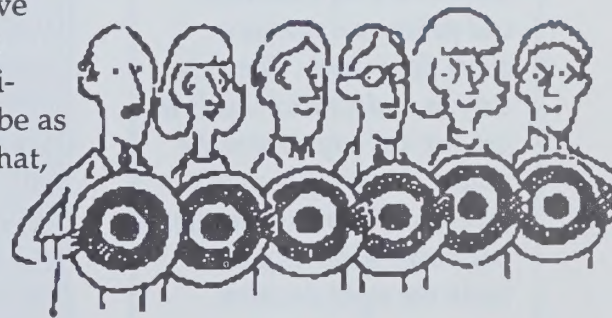
❑ To ensure the representativeness of the active minority that will participate in the public involvement program.

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS

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Case Study:
Fraser River Estuary
Management Program
(FREMP)



Developing acceptable solutions to sensitive problems requires the involvement of all affected parties - relevant industries, the public, government departments and agencies.

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You cannot place your own values on other people and assume that they are the same. Those of an urban native person may differ dramatically from those of a rural native person. The same is true of a commercial fisherman versus a sport fisherman. The only way to understand this is to get out and experience the issues. Your office won't give you the answer or the judgment necessary to make the right decision.

❑ To establish credibility by informing potentially affected publics, rather than have them discover they might be affected.

❑ To involve potentially affected publics early in the process while they can still exert some influence, rather than late in the process when they are forced into a supporter/adversary relationship.

Avoid the tendency to consult only with those who are likely to be supportive of a proposed action or decision, or with whom there has been effective communication in the past. For ef-

fective public involvement, those groups that are critical must be included. It is always better to hear criticisms early in the process, when the agency is not locked into a particular solution, or can make changes which respond to concerns expressed by the public. Only if all viewpoints are included is there any chance of a politically effective consensus.

It is better for an agency to be in the position of informing people that they could be affected by a decision than to have them "discover" it at a later date. When they discover it by

The Practitioners Speak.....

When I started out, I assumed that public involvement meant that we had to get the involvement of John and Jane Q. Citizen. What I quickly found out is that on most issues John Q. responded with a firm: "Don't bother me". After all, it is usually more fun to stay home and watch the game than it is to go to a meeting and yell at your neighbors. Besides people have other priorities, like earning a living, which come ahead of exciting things like long range planning.

But, I also found that there were other people that I could leave out of the process only at the risk of permanent scarring. It didn't have to make sense to me why they felt they were deeply affected and their neighbor didn't. If they felt affected by the decision, they were. The secret is to get enough good, accurate and reliable information out to the public so you can target these people before they find you. It's always better for you to be inviting them to participate than having them saying you left them out.

themselves there is often the feeling that the agency is trying to put something over on them, or is misleading them somehow. This may be difficult, because some people who may be potentially interested, such as people located near a proposed project, may not be organized. In some cases it is necessary for an agency to help such interests organize, since it is usually easier to work with an organized group than with a number of conflicting individual voices.

There are many examples throughout Canada of a public agency making a decision without public involvement, only to have public opposition develop afterwards. Sometimes a project can be salvaged; at other times it has to be completely scrapped because the opposition is so intense.

In Steveston, the Fraser River Harbour Commission had already dumped dredged sand on an island in the river at a cost of \$800,000, when public opposition halted the project. A consultation process was implemented to find a publicly acceptable means of disposing of dredged sand and to re-store harmony between the Harbour Commission and the community. A joint problem solving process was embarked upon, re-

sulting in the development of an acceptable solution to the community and the government agencies. The Harbour Commission, however, was required to remove the sand already dumped. The cost of the public involvement program to develop the solution was \$34,000.

Avoid underestimating the professional competence of citizens. Citizen groups are often composed of individuals with expertise and competence in subject areas relevant to the issue at hand.

Because these people are outside the agency, they are sometimes able to develop solutions to project issues in ways that had not been anticipated by agency staff.

Do not ignore professional publics from associated agencies. Staff and volunteers from associated agencies may be "stakeholders" in the project and have a contribution to make.

Do not ignore the "internal publics" within the agency. The agency's own staff needs to be involved in the public involvement program and informed of a decision making process developed for the issue at hand. Some issues and decisions, for example, may have different implications for other units in the agency.

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Case Study:
Fraser River Estuary
Management Program
(FREMP)

PHASE 2 - STEP 2

When you find people within your agency resisting public involvement, ask them what their idea is of "the public." Usually, they will respond that the public is a huge, undifferentiated mass of people. The first step in getting the staff to accept public involvement is to get them to change their image of "the public." In practical political terms, there may be some issues on which the number of crucial people to have participating is under ten; on others it may be several hundred.

Conclusions about "The Public"

The foregoing observations lead to certain basic conclusions about a definition of "the public" that is workable and democratically justifiable:

- ❑ **There is no such thing as "THE PUBLIC", there are only publics.** "The public", even "the majority", is really just aggregates of the millions of minorities that affiliate, collapse, and re-form on a continuous basis.
- ❑ **For any decision, the public consists of those people who see themselves as significantly affected.** This conclusion is based on the reality of how and why people participate. It is justifiable democratically because of the role that interest groups play and because those who perceive themselves as most affected are those who are the most visible and usually by far the most vocal.
- ❑ **People see themselves affected in a number of ways.** For example: proximity to a proposed project, economic gain or loss, establishing or maintaining an existing use, a social or environmental impact, or values and political philosophy.
- ❑ **Because people participate when they see themselves as affected, the size and composition of the public will differ for each public involvement program.** Different people will see themselves affected as issues change.
- ❑ **The size of the public for a particular issue increases with controversy.** This is virtually a "by definition" statement, since the word "controversy" means that there is a relatively large number of people who have chosen to be a part of the vocal minority for this particular decision.
- ❑ **The size of the public will increase the closer the decision is.** The impacts of decisions become clearer as the consequences are studied. As a result, more people realize they are affected and choose to participate. As alternative actions are defined during the course of a project, these alternatives in turn have impacts on new groups. Thus, the solution to one group's problem may actually be the problem from another group's perspective. Also, as the final decision gets closer, the jockeying for power among interests increases the likelihood of efforts to enlist the support of the unorganized public. As some alternatives are eliminated, or as mitigating actions are identified, some people who believed they were affected will drop out of the public involvement program. Normally this is offset by the people who begin to participate as a decision gets closer.

The most important conclusion to be derived from this discussion is that "the public" will be different for each decision. Some decisions may involve a very small - but hopefully representative - public, while other decisions will attract the interest of hundreds, even thousands, of people. One of the first tasks in designing a public involvement program is to carefully analyze which publics are likely to be interested in the decision, and what will be the intensity of interest. Nothing is quite as discouraging to agency staff than to commit major time and resources to a public involvement effort, only to have nobody interested. On the other hand, grossly underestimating public interest can lead to charges that an agency is "excluding the public", or even that it is trying to cover something up, or "cut secret deals".

Vern Millard, the former chairman of Alberta's energy industry regulatory body, the Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB), reported: "For several years, community involvement programs have been implemented by almost all applicants and have been of major importance in minimizing the number of hearings. However, they are not always conducted effectively and there has been a tendency by the ERCB to assume that where objections were filed to a proposed energy facility, they indicated an ineffective program.

"That explanation, however, is far too simplistic. Recent evidence shows that objections to some energy facilities are really due to the public's concerns about government standards relating to such sensitive issues as public health and safety or the environment. An applicant designs a proposed energy facility to meet government standards but if the public does not agree with them, then the problem will not be resolved by the applicant initiating a community involvement program. Clearly, those responsible for the standards (the regulatory agency and government departments) must be part of the public involvement process."

The Practitioners Speak.....

During the 1970s there was one land management agency which had advisory committees for each management unit. There was a local logger who cut timber on the land, a local rancher who grazed cattle on the land, a travel guide who took hunters into the back country, and so on. These folks kept telling the agency they're doing a fine job. Which was nice except this agency was just getting creamed in the media and in parliament with the emergence of the environmental movement. The problem was that the people selected for the committee all had the same philosophy as the agency. It was like getting up, looking in a mirror, and saying: "You're doing a fine job." The participation technique they had chosen systematically excluded all those groups which were critical of the agency, so the agency only heard what it wanted to hear. It may not be necessary to have a cast of thousands in your public participation program, but you do need to be very sure you're hearing all points of view.

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One of your major obligations to the public is to provide enough information so that people can make an informed choice about whether to participate.

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*Far more important than the size of the public participating is its **representativeness**. What you can't afford is a public involvement program which selectively omits major points of view which are then expressed outside your public involvement program, through other forms of intervention including protests or lawsuits.*

The Practitioners Speak.....

In one recent situation related to an offshore energy exploration program, the government agencies and the proponents held a series of public/community workshops to let the local residents know what they were planning to do. Both government and industry brought in their technical experts in biology, oil spill technology, and emergency response planning to name but a few. Everyone made the assumption that the audience would consist of the local business people, the native population, and a few-'back-to-the-landers'. Imagine the surprise they received when, in the public meetings, the back-to-the-landers turned out to hold PhD's in some of these same disciplines--in fact, better qualified than the 'experts'. It quickly became evident that the experts were out-classed and it was time to go back and do some more homework to answer the well articulated questions. It was somewhat embarrassing and certainly stressful for those involved. **The lesson....know your audience and their level of expertise before you go into a public format. If you don't have the opportunity to do this, then do your homework well. Be prepared!!!**

Final Thoughts from the Practitioners.....

- ☐ Recognize your obligation to provide sufficient information to the public about the consequences of a proposed action so that citizens can choose whether or not to participate in the decision around the action.
- ☐ There are many publics; **the public** is made up of constantly shifting affiliations, interest and alliances.
- ☐ Ensure that you do a good job of defining the issues so that you can target **all** the publics likely to be affected and approach them, rather than having them find out through other means and approach you instead.
- ☐ There is no such thing as the "layman" anymore. Many of the publics now have more experience than the people who run public involvement programs.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYZING THE SPECIFIC SITUATION

This chapter focuses on the third step in the initial planning phase, examining the detailed specifics of an issue. In developing a public involvement plan it is essential to identify all the factors which come to bear on the project. In this way an appropriate approach can be developed and public involvement techniques selected which meet the special circumstances of a given issue.

Four sets of factors can affect the approach and selection of techniques for a public involvement process:

- ☐ Characteristics of the Project or Policy Issues;
- ☐ Characteristics of the Public;
- ☐ Characteristics of Other Key Agencies; and
- ☐ Characteristics of the Decision

A combination of these factors will ultimately determine the overall approach which you will have to take in preparing your Action Plan and, ultimately, the overall public involvement program.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROJECT OR POLICY ISSUES

Project or policy issues need to be examined according to several factors:

Technical Complexity - The level of technical complexity may result in the need for much more public information so that the public(s) can understand what issues are most crucial. This information must be written so anyone can understand it.

Geographic Extent - Different approaches and techniques may need to be used depending on the size of the geographic region; a high density urban area may need to be treated much differently from that of a large rural area, even though they may have the same total population.

Scope of Interest - Some issues may be of interest only to the client group or to technical experts, while other issues are of interest to the broadest public audience. Appropriate techniques must be used to reach these different audi-

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Case Study: Swan Hills Special Waste Treatment Centre

*Reactionary people can
become positive contributors
if they feel part of the proc-
ess.*

ences. Understanding these audiences is key in this process.

Perceived Risk - The perceptions of the risk of a project sometimes vary among different public groups and the sponsoring agency. This may mean that a variety of techniques may be necessary for different potentially affected groups.

The public involvement process for the Swan Hills Special Waste Treatment Centre illustrates how a process was influenced by the particularly sensitive nature of the project. Early in the process, public acceptability was identified as a critical objective in siting the facility, as important as the technical criteria. This overriding factor influenced subsequent steps, including an emphasis on openness of information, and the decision to only consider communities which showed interest in the possible project, after receiving information about the project.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PUBLIC(S)

The manager of the public involvement program needs to examine the nature of the public which is being asked to participate:

Informed/Uninformed - The level and accuracy of information provided to the public prior to a project proposal may affect both the requirement for information as well as the development of ways to make the information more credible to the public.

Hostile/Apathetic - Hostility or apathy may be reactions to either the issue or to the agency and its history of trust with the public. If hostility is a factor, the public involvement techniques selected must allow for venting the hostility before any constructive work can be achieved. Conversely, if the public(s) are apathetic, enough information must be provided to allow individuals to determine if they want to participate.

Divided/United - If a public is united over an issue it means the agency knows where it stands and can work toward resolution knowing what it must work with. Divided publics are more difficult to respond to as they may be divided on many issues, not only those related to the specific project. It may be impossible to have these publics work together even if they eventually agree on the project specific issues.

Local, Provincial or National Interests -

Whether the publics are from the local or regional area, or are provincial and national organizations, will influence the requirements of the public involvement process. When national interest groups "parachute" into local/regional issues, hostilities can arise quickly between these "publics" as the different perspectives become apparent.

History of Public Involvement in the Region - If prior public involvement activity in the region has been viewed as successful by the public, then it is often much easier to work with interest groups again. If prior experiences have been bad then it may take much more time, information and energy to work with a skeptical public.

Maturity of the Conflict - Issues in the early stage of formation may be easier to manage or work with than those that have evolved or reached a stage of entrenchment where no one is willing to move from an adopted position. It is much better to identify issues as early as possible so that the publics are still willing to look at alternative courses of action. A discussion of identifying and managing issues is outlined in Appendix

One.

One method of analyzing the various publics is through "Policy Profiling". This is described in Volume Three, Dictionary of Techniques.

CHARACTERISTICS OF OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Federal Agencies and their Constituencies -

Other publics can include other associated or competing agencies at the federal level. What is often forgotten is that these agencies also may bring their own constituencies with them representing a much larger group than ever anticipated. These constituencies must be recognized and included.

Provincial/Territorial Counterparts - Other publics also include any provincial/territorial agencies where the federal department may be developing a public involvement program. These provincial agencies may also bring their sets of constituencies with them.

Devolution of Responsibilities - At present the federal government is devolving many responsibilities to the Yukon and Northwest Territorial Governments as

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People sometimes become entranced with the technology of public involvement, fascinated with some particular technique or even the use of sophisticated computer technology. However, there's no substitute for a program that's appropriate to the issue, the audience, and the agency. More is not necessarily better, unless it is required by your unique circumstances. Your challenge is to design a program which uniquely fits the needs of your situation, rather than impose a predetermined methodology which may have worked sensationally on another issue, but just doesn't make sense in the particular situation.

well as to native organizations across Canada. The situation is fluid and it is essential that anyone planning a public involvement program related to these jurisdictions be aware of the status of devolution and incorporate it into their planning.

Local Government/Native Government - The role of local and native governments as key publics is growing in Canada. It cannot be assumed that all native communities or local governments will have the same viewpoints on issues. The public involvement plan must adequately address meeting the needs of local and native governments.

Simultaneous Activities - It must be remembered that one agency is never acting alone in any setting. Anyone developing a public involvement program must be aware of the activity of other agencies (or other branches

of their agency) in the region.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DECISION

The nature of the decision to be made will influence the public involvement program and the techniques selected. Decision types include:

- ☐ A policy decision affecting agency operating procedure at a broad level.
- ☐ A regulatory decision, again affecting operating procedure but at a more detailed level.
- ☐ A field decision relating to a specific issue relevant only in a given field situation.

Final Thoughts From the Practitioners.....

- ☐ Be sure to take the time to pre-plan the PI program, and analyze the specific characteristics of the issue which will affect the selection of an approach and of techniques.
- ☐ Be sure that you design a program which uniquely fits the needs of your situation, rather than impose a pre-determined methodology which may have worked well in another situation, but doesn't make sense here.

CHAPTER 6

ESTABLISHING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OBJECTIVES

This chapter presents the fourth step of the initial planning process, the setting of objectives.

At this point, the manager will have already completed the following:

- ☐ Undertaken a preliminary "reconnaissance" to assess the level of public interest.
- ☐ Defined and clarified the decision making process and examined the opportunities for public involvement.
- ☐ Identified the "public" for the issue at hand.
- ☐ Examined the issue according to a number of specific situation characteristics.

The information derived from these steps will enable the manager to develop objectives for the public involvement program. This stage entails detailing exactly why the project manager wants to involve the public, what is the public's role, and what the project manager expects to achieve through public involvement.

Setting objectives is crucial; the nature of the objectives will influence the nature of the program and the degree of public involvement. Objectives may vary at each stage, as a project manager may want or need to accomplish different requirements at different stages.

WHEN IS PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT NEEDED?

Many efforts to define when public involvement is needed focus on the relative significance of the decision, or the extent to which it is controversial. One difficulty in using such criteria is that "significance" is in the eye of the beholder. An issue which looks relatively insignificant to an agency may be seen as very significant by an interest or user group. And by the time an issue becomes controversial, opportunities to prevent polarization may have been lost. A more useful approach is to consider which decisions are "political" and which are "technical".

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Many questions considered by line managers to be technical decisions actually contain important assumptions about equity, distribution of wealth, acceptable levels of safety, and environmental protection. These are all topics which the public sees as very potitical.

Guidelines: When Public Involvement is Needed

There are four general rules that can be used to determine when public involvement is needed:

□ Public involvement is needed when positive public support for a proposed action or decision is desired. Whenever an agency needs active public support, and not just passive acquiescence, there is a need for public involvement. Involvement is a means by which individuals and groups "buy into" a decision and actively support its implementation. And while public involvement may not guarantee support for a decision, if a decision or action is controversial, support is unlikely without it.

□ Public involvement is needed whenever a key public perceives that it has a lot to win or lose by a decision. The key word in this guideline is "perceive". Any

issue regarding health or safety in relation to toxic wastes, sour gas or nuclear energy tends to be perceived by the public as extremely significant, even though an agency may see the probability of risk as low.

□ Public involvement is needed when the results of a decision will significantly affect the economic, social, or political interests of some people or groups more than others. Beyond the questions of the extent of potential benefits or costs, there is the question of equity of their distribution. The most controversial decisions involve significant benefits and costs that are not distributed equally among different groups.

□ Public involvement is needed when a decision will significantly affect an already-existing controversy in the community. Sociologists refer to "cleavages" within communities—issues which already divide the community and are the basis for continuing political competition. Examples include the competing interests of downtown merchants and suburban merchants, "old-timers" versus newcomers, and pro-growth versus limited growth groups. Public involvement is particularly necessary in situations where an agency's decision would tend to

strengthen the position of one side or the other in such a conflict.

The nature of the public involvement program developed will depend upon such factors as the nature of the project, the amount of public interest, and any constraints imposed upon the agency.

For example, with a highly sensitive project such as a nuclear power plant or a hazardous waste treatment plant, it can be expected that the public will demand to be heard. It is essential that the agency be clear and open about the project objectives and avoid promoting unrealistic expectations. At the same time, it is important to provide a forum at which the publics' ideas are heard and taken seriously.

In another situation, public interest may be limited to a few interest groups and individuals. In this case, these groups would be the focus of the public involvement program, but with periodic checks with the larger public.

In some projects, the agency's alternatives may already be severely constrained by legal or regulatory constraints. In this situation, it may be better for the agency to take the political and public consequences of

making a unilateral decision, rather than spending the time and energy of both the staff and the various publics in developing a public involvement program that has no meaning and will not be used in the end, anyway. However, on the whole, an agency should involve the public, even when the decision cannot be altered.

Public involvement can address issues such as the mitigation of the environmental or social impacts of an action, or the nature of the safety program for a facility, without necessarily taking on the fundamental question of whether or not the action should be taken.

In conclusion, almost all decision processes will benefit from public involvement at each stage of project planning and implementation. The thrust of this manual is to encourage the increasing use of public involvement at early stages in project planning.



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Set realistic objectives for the public involvement process, and be frank about the limitations of results. Define legal or resource supply constraints and those items that must be decided at the political level. Indicate the approximate time necessary to obtain results. Make sure people's expectations are within the terms of reference when objectives are set by the working group.

PURPOSES OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

After determining whether public involvement is necessary, the project or line manager will need to clarify the general objectives for the program. These can encompass:

- ☐ tapping technical and local expertise of residents;
- ☐ using the experience and know-how of the public to develop creative solutions to problems;
- ☐ reducing later delays and costs from not having involved the public;
- ☐ creating the opportunity for the public to be heard before a decision;
- ☐ enabling the public to influence a decision;
- ☐ building public knowledge about a decision; and
- ☐ accessing field data (for example, obtaining information on residents' demographic profile or opinions).

DEVELOPING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OBJECTIVES FOR EACH STAGE IN THE PROCESS

Developing a public involvement program requires a thoughtful planning exercise. It is possible to guide project managers in this planning exercise, but it is not possible to provide simplistic answers in the selection of techniques for different situations. The steps outlined in previous chapters have provided the project manager with the information needed to develop objectives for each stage of the process.

A generic example of objectives tied to stages is provided in Figure 4. In a real situation, objectives developed would be de-tailed and issue-specific. The development of these objectives will guide the manager in identifying information exchange requirements (Chapter 7), and ultimately, in selecting public involvement techniques (Volume Three).

Figure 4
Developing Objectives

Stage	Objectives
Issues Identification/ Sensing Public Interest	Obtain a complete understanding of how the issue is viewed by all significant interests. Identify the level of interest in future public participation activities on this issue.
Detailed Identification of Impacts	Undertake a scoping exercise to identify the most significant impacts.
Assessment of Impacts	Develop a complete understanding of the impacts as viewed by the public. Assess the relative merit assigned to the project by various interests, including their reasons for these evaluations. Develop understanding of possible mitigation procedures, as viewed by the public.
Decision Making	Make a decision that is technically, economically and socially feasible, and politically acceptable.
Post Approval Decision Making	Develop all requirements for public involvement following the decision.

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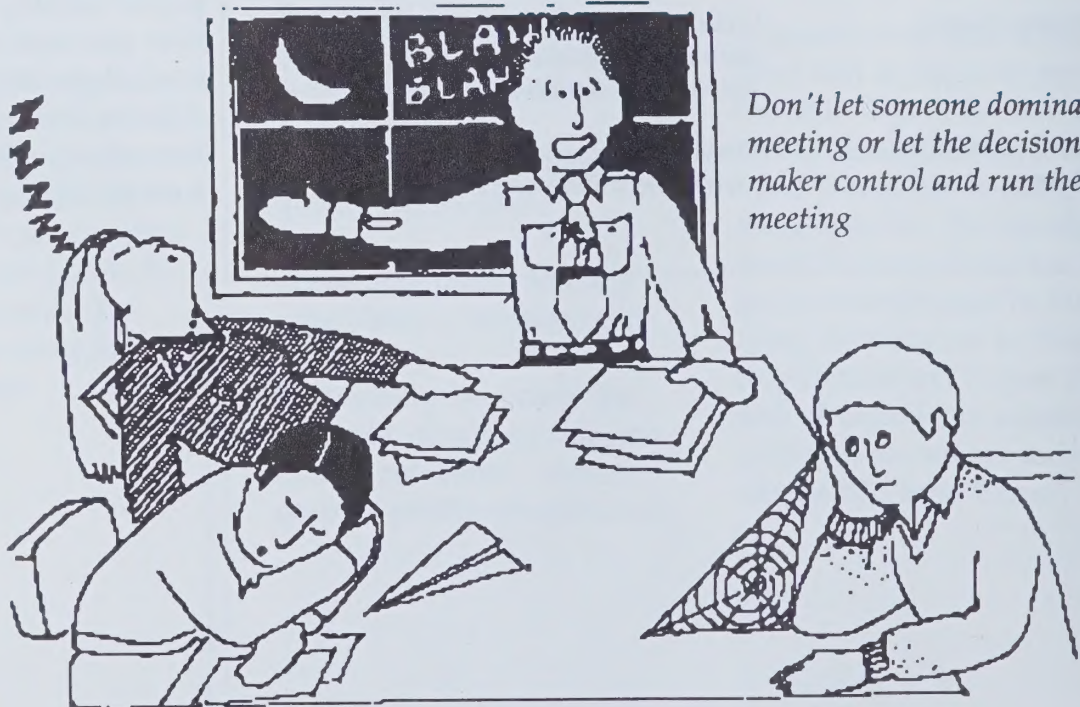
You can't make intelligent choices about what public involvement techniques you should use until you have a clear idea of what it is you want to accomplish at each step of your decision making process. Remember, what you want from the public changes at each step. When you're "scoping out" an issue you want, and have available for the public, different kinds of information than when you're trying to evaluate alternatives.

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One of the reasons for being very clear on what you want is that the public is often very obliging and will give you exactly what you ask for. Ask a dumb question, and you'll get an answer which may not be very helpful. But it wasn't the public's fault!

Final Thoughts from the Practitioners.....

- ☐ Clearly establish what you want to achieve with the public involvement program.
- ☐ Remember the importance of early public involvement.
- ☐ Make sure that objectives are developed for each stage of the public involvement program outlining what is to be



Don't let someone dominate the meeting or let the decision maker control and run the meeting

CHAPTER 7

DETERMINING THE INFORMATION EXCHANGE REQUIREMENTS

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This chapter describes the final step in Phase Two of the "Public Involvement Planning Process", identifying the total range of information needed by both the agency and by the public.

Before the public can participate effectively, it must be adequately informed. This means that there is a significant public information component in every public involvement program. However, a public involvement program comprises more than just public information. The difference between the two is that public involvement stresses two-way communication, while public information stresses getting information to the public.

INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS

The completion of Step Four resulted in a clear understanding of what needs to be accomplished with the public at each step in the decision making process. In Step Five the task is

to define the type of information that is needed from the public, and to establish guidelines for the information that must be given to the public.

A useful and manageable way of handling this step is to design a series of charts, one for each step in the process. Each chart would outline:

- ☐ the relevant step in the decision making process (from Chapter 3)
- ☐ the various publics who should be involved in this step (from Chapter 4)
- ☐ any special circumstances (from Chapter 5)
- ☐ the objectives for the public involvement program (from Chapter 6)

Once the public involvement action plan is completed (Chapter 8) each chart could be expanded to include the techniques selected for the given situation. Figure 5 presents a series of charts for a generic decision making process, showing how the selection of objectives influences the information exchange. In this example, each stage of the process has its own set of PI objectives,

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The thing I learned from the government's information program is that special wastes aren't as scary as the public perceives them to be. The way I see it, the more you learn, the less scary the subject becomes.

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its own information exchange, and ultimately would have its own unique set of techniques. In this manual, general terms are used; a more detailed and specific description of the information exchange will be needed in actual situations. Some of the Environment Canada, Parks case studies reviewed for this manual provide good examples of using different techniques at different stages in the process, depending on what the objectives are at each stage and what information needs to be exchanged. For ex-

ample, the planning process for both the Bruce Peninsula National Park and the Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve combined a wide range of techniques, including:

- information packets
- information meetings
- open houses
- newsletters
- direct contact with individual households
- establishing committees to examine special issues

Figure 5
Detailing the Information Exchange for Each
Stage in a Generic Decision Making Process

STAGE 1:
ISSUE IDENTIFICATION/SENSING PUBLIC
INTEREST

Public involvement objectives:

1. Obtain a complete understanding of how the problem is viewed by all significant interests.
2. Identify the level of interest in future public participation activities surrounding this issue.

Information to the public:

The nature of the study and decision making process.
What the agency presently knows about the problem/
issue.
The kinds of public participation activities possible.
The issues that are likely to arise.

Information from the public:

How different groups see the problem.
How the problem affects them.
The intensity of the impacts.
The publics that are interested in or affected by the problem.
Which publics want to participate.
How intensely the groups want to participate.
Which techniques are most acceptable or suitable.

Special circumstances:

Public involvement techniques:

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Clarity on what information you need from the public takes the public involvement objectives one step further. You must be very specific about exactly what information you need. This will also tell you who can provide that information. Some information can only come from local governments, (e.g. local zoning or planning requirements), while information about public values should come from a cross-section of the public.

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Figure 5
(continued)

STAGE 2: **DETAILED IDENTIFICATION OF IMPACTS**

Public involvement objectives:

1. Develop a list of significant impacts.
-

Information to the public:

A summary of the problem as defined in Stage 1.
The range of impacts known to the agency.
Factors usually considered in the analysis stage.

Information from the public:

Additional impacts known to the public.
Additional factors that the public believes should be
included in the analysis.

Special circumstances:

Public involvement techniques:

Figure 5
(continued)

STAGE 3:
ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS

Public involvement objectives:

1. Develop a complete understanding of the impacts, as viewed by the public.
2. Assess the relative merit assigned to the project by various interests, including their reasons for their evaluations.
3. Develop understanding of mitigation procedures possible, as viewed by the public.

Information to the public:

The factors and methodology used to assess the project, including any weighting factors.

A description of the final evaluation and decision making process.

Information from the public:

Additional impacts, including the importance of the impacts.

Additional factors that need to be analyzed.

Suggested methodology for assessment.

What various publics like and dislike about the project.

Modifications to the project that could make it acceptable.

Rankings of alternative solutions

Special circumstances:

Public involvement techniques:

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When providing information to the public it's not enough to hand people a six-inch stack of material and say; "Here's the information, react!" The information has to be presented in a form which can be digested. If you're running a workshop to evaluate alternatives, for example, the challenge will be to present information about the alternatives in a brief, succinct manner, yet provide sufficient information so that people can give you an informed reaction.

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Don't assume that as soon as you've completed your authoritative text on "everything anybody would want to know" that your job is done. Now you've got to make that information usable.

Figure 5
(continued)

STAGE 4: DECISION MAKING

Public involvement objectives:

Make a decision that is technically, economically and socially feasible, and is also politically acceptable.

Information to the public:

The proposed recommendation on the project/issue.
Reasons for the choice/factors used in the decision making.

Process for making the final decision.

Final decision.

Reasons for decision.

Information from the public:

Reactions to the proposed recommendation.

Modifications that could make the decision more acceptable.

Recommended implementation steps.

Special circumstances:

Public involvement techniques:

The Practitioners Speak.....

Never forget the "\$10,000 worth of graphics" rule. If you come into a meeting displaying a proposed action, all lovingly prepared with beautiful graphics and maps, and then you tell the audience that you're open to considering alternatives, they are never going to believe you. The public is smart enough to know that any agency that spends \$10,000 on graphics to sell its plan isn't about to change it. If you want to go in with something that is going to be treated as preliminary, it had better look preliminary. Well done drawings or lettering on flip chart sheets may do the job better than fancy graphics. Or make up enough maps so that the public can draw alternatives all over them. Some of these little things tell the public whether you really mean it or not.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND TRADITIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

To be credible, public involvement requires objectivity and a willingness to consider all points of view. Traditional views of public relations in an agency are that this function may reduce objectivity in order to present the agency in a favourable light.

Materials which suggest that an agency or department

has a pre-determined position, or suggest an unwillingness to hear criticisms or alternative ideas, will seriously undermine the public involvement effort. The purpose of all materials used in public involvement is to provide adequate information to the public(s) so people can participate effectively, not to convince the public of a department's answer. Guidelines for dealing with the media are beyond the scope of this publication; other references are available on media or public affairs programs.

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Final Thoughts from the Practitioners.....

- ☐ The public must be adequately informed before the public can participate effectively.
- ☐ Give careful thought in advance to the kinds of information required from and to be given to the public at each stage of the process.
- ☐ Be prepared for unfair criticism; no matter how well planned your public information programs, you still may receive complaints about quality, quantity, appropriateness, and distribution of information.



CHAPTER 8

DEVELOPING A PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTION PLAN

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This chapter describes the third phase of the public involvement planning process, preparing the public involvement action plan.

Having a public involvement plan in hand prior to embarking on a public involvement program is essential, even in the case of relatively small scale projects where the mandate for public involvement is informal.

Past experience shows that preparing a plan is a necessary step for successful public involvement. Public involvement is a professional activity, and requires the same kind of careful planning and analysis as other comparable activities.

PREPARING A PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

The detailed action plan would not normally be prepared until after some preliminary consultation activities (Phase 1) and the analytical steps of the pre-planning phase (Phase 2).

Figure 6 reviews the phases of the PI planning process which have been introduced in this manual.

Chapters 2 to 7 lead you through the analysis needed to prepare a plan. Chapter 3 identified the importance of clarifying the decision making process. Chapter 4 described techniques for identifying the public (the publics) who will be concerned with the issues at hand. Chapter 5 described how to identify specific characteristics of the situation which will influence the selection of objectives. Chapter 6 described the process of developing public involvement objectives for each stage of the process.

Chapter 7 described ways to identify the exchange of information which will need to take place between your agency and the public. Now you are being asked to use all this analysis to prepare a plan. The following section outlines and discusses the contents of the plan. These are summarized in Figure 7.

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THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN'S KEY CONTENTS

a) Informal Consultation Activities:

Describing the preliminary consultation activities demonstrates that key interests have been consulted, and gives credibility to the description of issues, interested publics, and the assessment of the intensity of interest.

b) Description of Issues:

This description allows management or public groups reviewing the document to assess the likely interest of the various publics, and evaluate the adequacy of the proposed plan. This section also alerts management to upcoming issues which may be controversial.

c) Intensity of Interest:

This is the staff's estimate of how controversial the issues are likely to be, and the rationale for the level of public involvement activity shown in the plan.

d) Interested Publics: The reason for identifying the interested publics, and their reasons for being interested, is so that people reviewing the plan can make their own assessment of how controversial the issue will be, and whether the

proposed public involvement plan is adequate.

e) Decision Making Process:

The decision making process is the framework into which the public involvement activities must be integrated. If an agency's decision making process is not well defined, the need to prepare a public involvement plan may act as an internal catalyst to define the process.

f) Objectives:

An explicit statement of objectives is essential to convey intended outcomes. Agreement on objectives must be obtained from all parties or people will find later that it is too easy to lapse into cross purposes or endless controversy about choice of methods. Clearly stated objectives form the basis for later monitoring and evaluation.

g) Plan of Activities: This is the heart of the plan. The sequential plan of activities should include all related activities such as public information reports or other publications, news releases or other media-related activities, planning meetings, dry-runs of presentations, and the means of keeping agency personnel informed. Since the plan requires coordination between various groups in the agency, listing responsibilities and deadlines identifies required lead time and

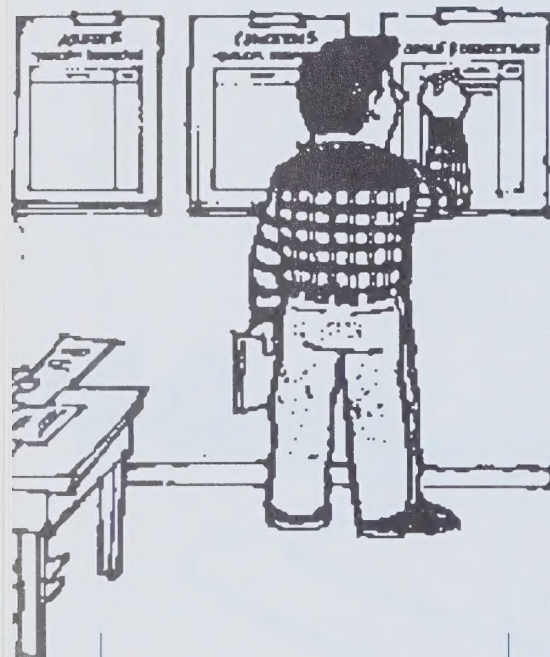


Figure 6
Developing a Public Involvement Action Plan

Phase 1 - Early Consultation

- Consult Informally
- Identify Major Issues
- Estimate Level of Public Interest
- Identify Key People and Organizations

Phase 2 - Initial Planning

- Chart Decision Making Process
- Identify Publics
- Identify Situation Characteristics
- Establish Public Involvement Objectives
- Determine Information Exchange Requirements

Phase 3 - Develop Action Plan

- Choose Methods
- Establish Internal Communications
- Commit Resources
- Schedule and Assign Work

Phase 4 - Implement the Plan and Evaluate

- Implement
- Monitor the Public Involvement Action
- Evaluate Results

Phase 5 - Post Decision Public Involvement Plan

- Develop Post Decision Requirements
- Implement as Required

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*Use numerous techniques
to reach different kinds of
people..*

Figure 7

Generic Table of Contents for a Public Involvement Action Plan

- 1. Introduction, Description of the Project**
- 2. Summary of Phase 1 - Early Consultation**
 - the process of informal consultation used
 - major issues identified
 - estimate of level of interest
 - key people and organizations
- 3. Summary of Phase 2 - Initial Planning**
 - decision process chart
 - identified publics
 - situation description
 - public involvement objectives
 - information exchange requirements
- 4. Phase 3 - Action Plan**
 - selection of methods to be used
 - internal communications arranged
 - budget and staff commitment
 - work schedule, assignments and deadlines
- 5. Phase 4 - Implement the Plan**
 - complete all requirements for implementation, and evaluate
- 6. Phase 5 - Post Decision Public Involvement**
 - complete all post decision requirements

resources from other groups in the organization.

h) Budget and Staffing: The budget and staffing estimate will normally receive only internal review. The preparation of these budget and staffing estimates provides a mechanism for management control and also establishes a commitment for the level of support the program can expect to receive from other parts of the organization.

i) Public Review: Review of public involvement plans by those publics who are most likely to participate is encouraged. If the plan is seen as adequate, fair and providing good visibility, it will lend legitimacy to whatever decision finally results.

j) Evaluation: Be sure to build in checkpoints, places at which you can stop to re-assess the adequacy of your program, based on public response.

The Practitioners Speak.....

Most of the time people want to get out of doing public involvement. But once everybody believes it's really going to happen, then suddenly you find all kinds of turf battles developing. The program manager thinks she should be in charge, the public information officers think he should be in charge, the local manager on the ground thinks she should be in charge, the people handling government relations think they should be in charge.

I started insisting on public involvement plans originally just so we'd force ourselves to do a good job of analyzing the situation. But what I've discovered is that it's also the best way I know to resolve these "turf battles". Now it's not a part of the organization which is in charge, it's "the plan" which is in charge, and the public information officer, the local manager, and the governmental affairs woman all know what's expected of them. **Public participation plans started out being a way to improve communication with the public, but they may be just as important for getting people inside the organization to talk to each other.**

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Case Study: Canadian Superior Oil Sour Gas Well

Be sure to build in checkpoints at which you stop to re-assess the adequacy of your program based on public response. Don't assume that this will always mean increasing your program. Not infrequently you'll find issues you thought were going to be controversial don't justify the level of program you had anticipated.

This may not always mean increasing the size or extent of your program. If an issue is not as controversial as you had anticipated, the program can be scaled down.

A project which benefited from public involvement planning was undertaken by Canadian Superior Oil Ltd. in Hinton, Alberta. The project was a "critical" sour gas well to be drilled near the town. Before any field activities in the community were carried out, the staff had:

- ☐ received full support of company management;
- ☐ received a clear set of operating guidelines established by the company respecting the communications process, the goals of the involvement program, and the commitments management could or could not make;
- ☐ discussed with management the nature of any constraints imposed on the public involvement program; and
- ☐ developed an outline of the steps to be followed and techniques to be used.

LENGTH AND COMPLEXITY OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLANS

A public involvement plan can vary in length from a single page to many, depending on the complexity of the program. The plan is not intended to be a bureaucratic formality, but a flexible document that provides a structure for analyzing the requirements of the situation. The criteria which can be used to determine the adequacy of detail of a public involvement plan are:

- ☐ It should be sufficiently detailed to permit development of budget, staff, and schedule estimates;
- ☐ It should allow management to assess the adequacy of activities planned in relationship to the level of public interest; and
- ☐ It should provide sufficient information so that it is intelligible to any public interest groups who review the plan.

The shortest document that meets these purposes is the best.

Not all the analysis completed in previous chapters will be included in the public involvement plan. You

might, for example, choose to exclude your description of special circumstances or the de-tailed information exchange. That kind of analysis is necessary to prepare the plan; it is not mandatory that all this pre-analysis be included in the plan. It may be easier to simply show a series of tasks, with deadlines and responsibilities assigned. The key question is whether management or the public needs this material to evaluate the adequacy of your plan.

THE ACTIVITY STATEMENT

A potentially controversial project may justify preparation of activity descriptions for each major step in the public involvement plan, to show why the technique or activity was selected, and how it relates to program objectives. The activity descriptions ask the following questions:

- ☐ What are the specific

objectives of the activity?

- ☐ How is the activity designed to meet these objectives?
- ☐ Who are the target publics (specifically)?
- ☐ What are the issues that are anticipated to arise at this point?
- ☐ What level of public interest is expected?

As a sample, a completed Activity Statement for a public meeting is shown as Figure 8.

The information provided is essential for management review, and also helps the staff to think the plan through very carefully. However, on some projects, requiring Activity Statements could make the process of developing a public involvement plan overly bureaucratic and thus wasteful, when a simpler summary of the plan would be sufficient. The decision on the level of detail must be made by the public involvement manager.

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*Timing is everything –
You can develop the most
elaborate program which
may take months or years to
implement. You may get the
best possible involvement
and the best data, but if the
decision was made months
before, of what value was
the public involvement pro-
gram?*

Figure 8 Sample Activity Statement Form

Activity statement number: _____

Est. date of activity: _____

Activity: Public Meetings in Glenville and Rockford

Objectives of the activity:

1. Identify health, safety, or nuisance concerns of residents of Rockford & Glenville regarding construction of Power Plant #3 beginning June '83.
2. Identify mitigation actions the company can take to respond to these concerns.

How objectives will be met:

These workshops will provide an opportunity for residents of the area to identify what their concerns are about the impacts of construction on Power Plant #3, which will begin in approximately six months. The workshops are being co-sponsored by church groups in both towns, who have arranged newspaper publicity and a handout to be sent home with school children, and have organized a phone campaign to ensure attendance.

The meeting will have three parts. During the first part of the meeting, representatives from the company will describe the timing and nature of the construction on Power Plant #3. A question and answer session will then follow. After the question and answer session the audience will be broken up into small work groups which will be asked to brainstorm lists of their concerns and rank their importance on individual hand-in response forms.

The results of these workshops will be reviewed with the Citizen Task Force, and the company will then work with the task force to develop mitigation plans. These plans will then be presented in another round of public meetings.

Target publics:

These meetings are aimed specifically at residents of these two communities, rather than regional publics. The meetings will be targeted for a cross-section of "typical" residents, rather than organized interests.

Anticipated issues:

1. Construction worker housing.
2. Overcrowding of schools, hospitals, other community services.
3. Danger to school children from truck traffic.

Expected interest level: Very high.

Final Thoughts from the Practitioners.....

- ☐ Prepare a public involvement plan for the decision making process, even if the project is small and the mandate for public involvement an informal one.
- ☐ The shortest document that does the job is the best.
- ☐ Be sure to build in checkpoints at which you stop to assess the adequacy of your program based on public response.

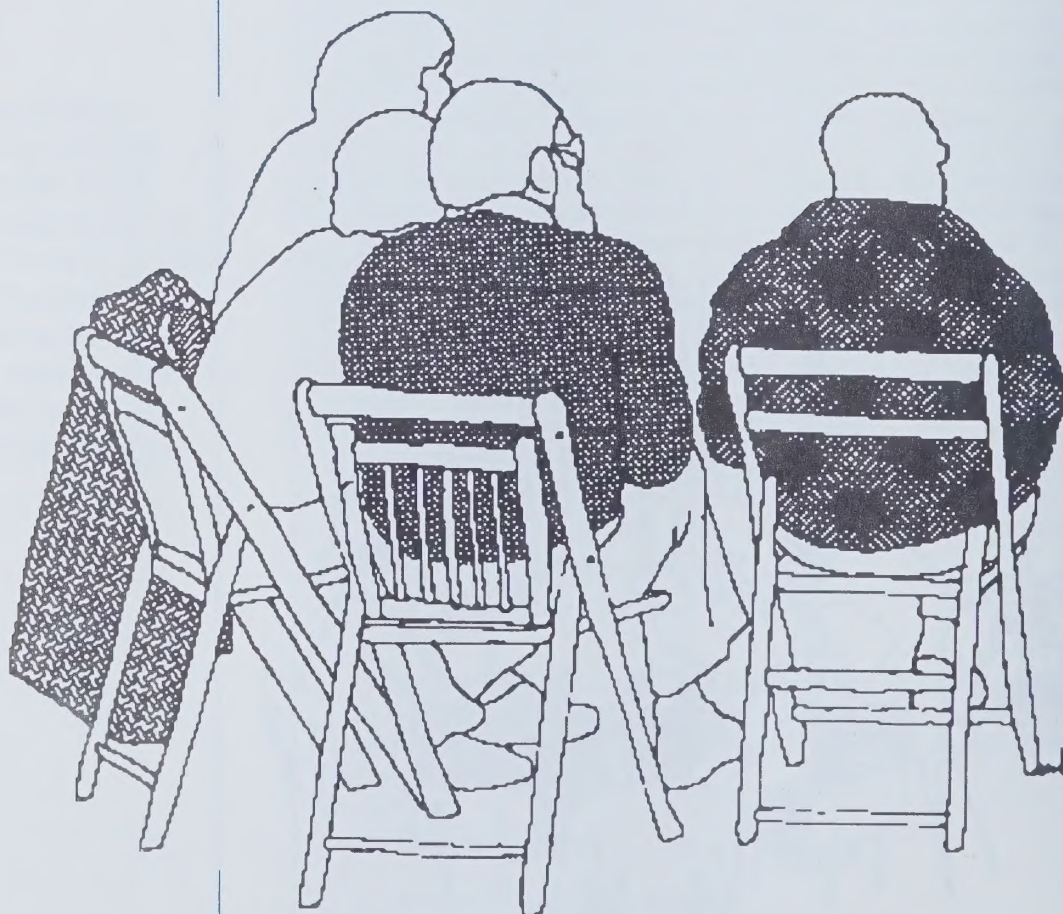
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CHAPTER 9

IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

This chapter is very brief, as the manual has already discussed the relevant implementation issues.

As noted earlier in this manual, few decision making processes are as straightforward and linear in practice as they are on paper. No public involvement plan, particularly for controversial decisions, can ever accurately foresee all contingencies. For this reason it is wise to build in review points for evaluating whether revisions to the plan are necessary. Equally important, a public involvement plan is a kind of contract with both the public and other groups in the agency. By defining where the review points are, the process of revising plans is seen as a planned activity, rather than something arbitrary. Others who might want changes made to the plan will then be alerted as to when a plan review is scheduled. Personnel responsible for monitoring

should be included in the work schedule.

Public involvement is time consuming and expensive. It should be evaluated for results in the same way that other project components are for costs and benefits. Who conducts the evaluation and what reports are generated should be decided early and included in the work schedule. The evaluation should be carried out by someone not directly involved in the day to day running of the program.

Criteria for judging the effectiveness of a public involvement program are themselves a potential source of controversy. The criteria to be applied must relate to the stated objectives of the public involvement plan and should be able to distinguish between questions relating to the fate of the project and those relating to participant satisfaction with the integrity of the process of involvement.

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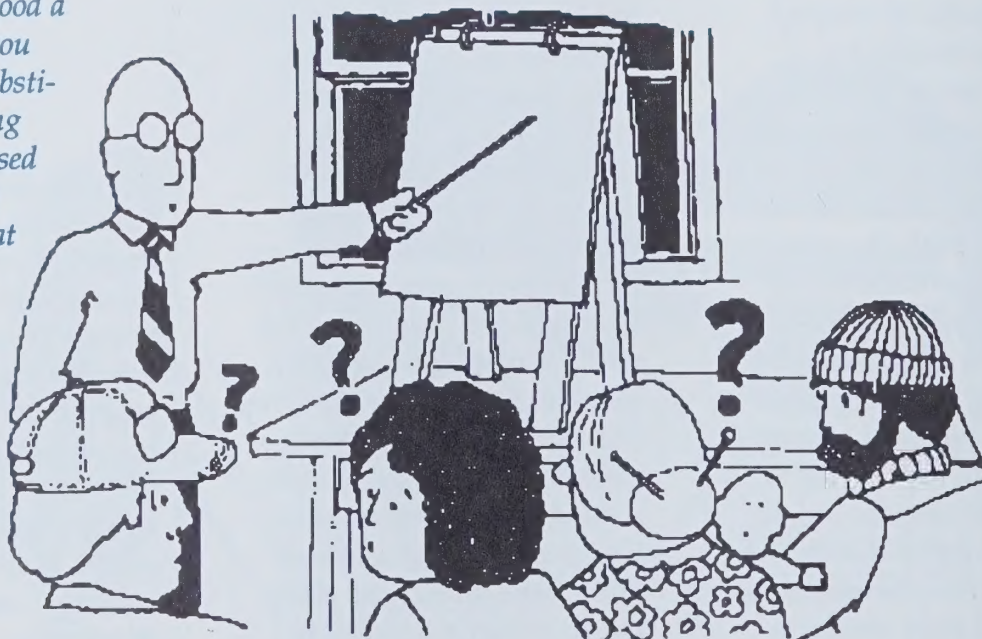
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Sincerity and commitment to the process are conveyed mostly by concrete actions: the speed with which you respond to requests for information; the quality of support services; the courtesy you give all contacts; the evidence of follow-up on recommendations; the completion of homework between meetings; and levelling with people when you have trouble delivering part of your work.

Final Thoughts from the Practitioners.....

- ☐ Evaluate the program based on what happened, not what was expected.

No matter how good a job of planning you do, there is no substitute for evaluating your program based on what actually happens, not what you expected to happen.



CHAPTER 10

POST DECISION PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLANNING

Public involvement does not have to stop once “the decision” has been made. Public involvement is needed throughout the decision making process, and all decisions may not have been made at the time of project approval.

If a decision is made not to proceed with a project, it is important to have developed a strategy to inform the public why this decision was made. Too often, the senior decision makers know the reasons for the decision. They see their role in the process as having been completed and move on to other activities. They do not think, or realize, that the public may not have been part of the final decision. The public is left without any follow-up and has no understanding as to why the decision went the way it did. For your sake, you should hope that you are not the next person or agency having to go in and co-ordinate a public involvement program with those people. Cooperation may be limited, to say the least. The moral here is to finish what you started. It

will pay dividends if, and when, you have to go back to those publics to work with them in the future.

More importantly, there can be continued involvement in further planning, in implementation, monitoring, mitigation, compensation and evaluation, especially with those aspects of the project that affect that public.

Why bother having continued public involvement? For the same reasons you have early involvement: for ease of implementation, to maintain good relations with the public, and to allow non-crucial decisions to be postponed until after project approval.

Proponents and government regulators on resource development projects often cannot accurately predict all the effects a project will have on a community or region. If the affected community is powerful and organized, it could stop the project from proceeding with the argument that

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more research is needed, and the project should not be allowed to proceed until the research is complete. This can be very time consuming and often unreasonable, as some impacts cannot be accurately predicted until the project is under way.

However, granting approval based only on faith in the proponent can be unreasonable to the community. Post-approval public involvement can be used to deal with this problem; approval can be granted with a provision for continued public involvement. Impacts not identified during the approval phase of the project can be dealt with as they develop.

There is a danger in postponing decision making; this can be used to avoid dealing with serious issues prior to project approval. Therefore, it is vital that decisions on fundamental issues are not postponed.

In addition, a follow-up and appeal mechanism is needed, in case there are legitimate concerns with decisions made after project approval, or in case an issue that appeared to be minor becomes important and the project as a whole needs to be re-examined. There is a need for the

manager to have power in this post decision process. There will need to be enforcement mechanisms as well as the ability to return to the regulator or decision making body if an issue cannot be resolved.

You can use a number of mechanisms for public involvement programs such as having public representatives on a project management committee, possibly appointed by a community organization. You can also work directly with interest groups or community leaders, both through informal discussions or other, more formal, means. However, as discussed in previous chapters, be sure all interests are represented or you will find yourself in some difficult situations.

Several key points are noteworthy:

- ☐ Objectives should be jointly developed by the participants, and be clear, achievable, and appropriate.
- ☐ The public involvement program must have a possibility of achieving an impact, of changing things.
- ☐ If all the decisions have already been made, and

there is no legitimate room for involvement, then there is no appropriate role for a program and you are, in fact, mis-using the resources available to you.

☐ You must be dealing with real issues, of concern to the public. If this is not the situation, the public will find other ways of achieving their ends.

☐ Project implementation can be a slow and tedious process. You will need commitment from all involved, and an ability to deal with changes in the actors who will be involved. You will need a commitment from everybody to make the process work. Commitment is especially important given potentially long time frames.

☐ New issues or events can arise that can affect the process or change the situ-

ation. You will need flexibility to deal with these changes.

☐ Public involvement must have a finite point at which it is to end.

You can specify a lifespan, to end at a set time or when specific goals are reached. The process can be designed to be revived as needed, perhaps when the project is to be shut down. Then you can involve the community in planning for the decommissioning.

☐ Evaluate throughout the process and complete a post assessment when the process is completed.



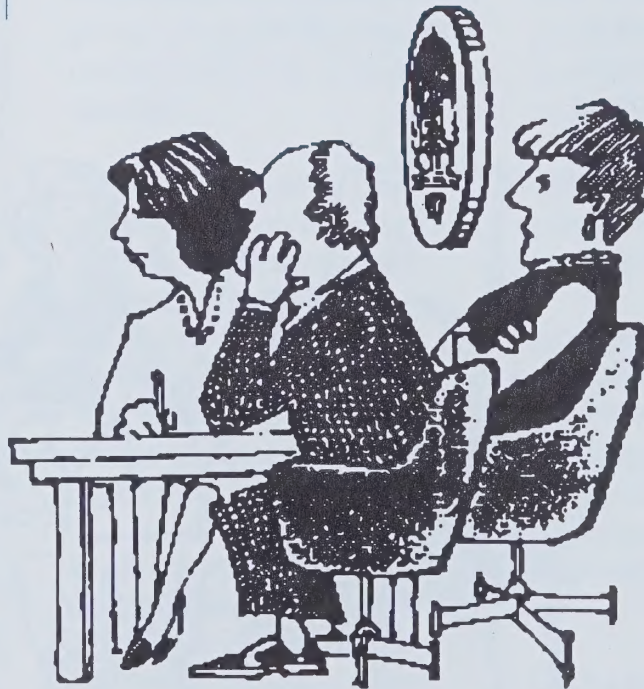
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Final Thoughts from the Practitioners....

☐ Do some form of post-decision public involvement. At the very least, notify the public of the decision made, and let them know how their comments were used in the final decision.

☐ Consider involving the public in implementation, monitoring, mitigation, compensation, and evaluation aspects of the project.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE ISSUES MANAGEMENT

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Introduction

The actions of key public and private sector audiences and the media can have untold influence on the ability of a government agency to effectively carry out its mandate. Consequently, responding to key audiences on public policy issues or key projects has become a growing problem for larger (and not so large) government organizations. The challenge is to respond in a way that increases an organization's chances of affecting the outcome of major issues and in a manner which is consistent with what that organization has said and done previously.

The term "issues management" (or perhaps, "response management") is a systematic way of organizing many actors in a large organization to anticipate, identify, and respond to specific problems, opportunities or public policy issues in a consistent and coordinated manner.

Scope of Issues Management

Issues Management is a boundary spanning function with one eye cast inside the organization, and the other focused outside on events which could affect upon the organization's plans.

A structured program to manage issues places an organization in better control of events; it helps an organization with its vital functions of setting goals and adapting to the socio-political environment. Issues management acts as an early warning system. Instead of reacting as issues arise, the organization is able to select issues of primary importance and plan how best to determine their final resolution. Issues management is a means of helping strategic planners recognize possible changes in the external environment and plan to meet these changes. And for those who work with external audiences on a day to day basis it provides a positions bank regarding what may be, or has been, said on key issues.

Managing issues also performs an integrative function within an organization, and prevents inconsistent policy statements coming from the same organization. As one example, separate committees of a volunteer organization — tax and economics — were on the verge of making different and conflicting representations to government. A structured issues management program would increase the prospect of separate groups working together to debate the issue internally and work out the best position for the organization.

An issues management system also can prevent the kind of situation where an Assistant Deputy Minister drafts a position on an issue to the press, the Minister then makes an announcement and the staff working on the issue read about the decision in the newspaper.

An issues management system should ensure the agency's positions on key issues are updated and available to those who are relating to both internal and external audiences. Issues management involves agency response to an issue as well as planning the communicating with key publics if necessary.

Issues Defined

What exactly are issues" and how do we "manage" them? As might be expected there are many definitions of the term issue — the Issues Management Society, Chase/Jones Issues Management Model, even the legal discipline, all have rather firm notions about what the word "issues" means.

For the purpose of this manual an "issue" is "a problem or an opportunity which potentially involves an external audience and which has the potential to affect the plans of the department or agency".

The Process

Let us look at the actual process of handling issues. The real problem is not just getting an issues management program started but keeping it going, and keeping it valuable to the host organization. There is no foolproof method. We will describe how one "case study" actually works. This is not to be used as the only possible approach; each organization must evolve its own process which is suited to its own particular culture and needs.

There are some basic activities which most issues management systems share.

First, it is essential to produce a document which will be updated regularly. This sounds bureaucratic and unexciting; however, the act of producing a document adds discipline to most processes. Also, it is a fact of life in large organizations that if one wants to be 'listened' to by more than a few, don't say it — write it!

If a document is to be produced, someone must be put in charge of its production and be responsible for attending to all of the events which accompany the process. This could be someone in a corporate planning group, public affairs, or any other group which performs a function that cuts across the operational lines.

The format of the document will depend on the organization. Following is a format which has worked in several commercial corporations.

STEP 1 - Identification of Key Issues (Environmental Scanning)

There is no way to describe a clear-cut, objective method of identifying key issues. The process of identifying issues is as much intuitive as it is objective. The sort of people who are best at this activity are holistic thinkers who, because of their training or special aptitude, have a good sense of the interre-

lationships in society, and can see the broad picture, not just from the government department's viewpoint, but the greater society's point of view as well. This ability is particularly important in identifying newly emerging issues.

Identifying issues is not just a matter of using one's intuition, however. It is necessary to have good contacts in government and industry, as well as access to public opinion polling data, industrial outlook information, economic forecasts and other relevant data. Other important abilities include understanding the political and economic environment; integrating and synthesizing information and showing its relevance to the organization; familiarity with the wishes of the "Executive" groups; and remaining informed about the organization's plans.

Sometimes the question arises, "How many issues do you identify?" There is no good answer. The great danger is being too exhaustive. Don't concentrate on identifying every issue. If a list is too long or too complicated, no one will read it. Rather than an extensive list, it is preferable to choose the most important ones which could affect the agency's planning and to which it is possible to develop con-

structive responses.

The person responsible for the initial identification should talk to the line managers to validate or improve the list. This is a vital part in the step of identifying the key issues.

STEP 2 - Issue Groups

The purpose of issue groups is to debate and validate issues, propose departmental positions and identify possible courses of action.

Once a validated list has been developed and a clear notion obtained of how the issues represent problems or opportunities the list is broken into "natural" groupings. Managers who are knowledgeable about particular issues are brought together to consider possible action. It may be wise to have an issue group for macro issues of national importance which have the potential to affect many areas of departmental responsibility. Other issue groups should be formed specifically to focus on a particular issue or a particular region.

For example, the head of an economic planning group, the Director of Public Affairs, the head financial manager and the chief of development may comprise a group assessing macro-economic issues. Typically

there may be three or four such groups.

Before each group meets, a summary page is prepared and distributed for each issue. The definition of the issues and proposed actions are validated or changed through discussion. The discussion group develops objectives (desired end results for each issue) and tentatively identifies strategies (approaches to be used to achieve the desired end results).

Keeping an issue group going is a dynamic process; groups will change as people change jobs or as issues wax and wane. Consequently, the groups will reflect these changes. It is not a static, mechanical regimen.

The process of meeting with issues groups is not a long one. Typically, it takes two hours or less every quarter for each group, but this is in addition to brief one-on-one conversations which are very critical to the process.

Figure 1
Layout of a Record of Issues

Record of Issues	
Issue: Date:	
Priority:	Business Unit: (or departmental jurisdiction)
Issue Description: 	Public Position:
	Departmental Strategies
	Departmental Activities
	Person(s) Responsible

STEP 3 - Drafting the Document (Issues Record)

The Document's Format

The finished document will have a range of topics. It lists constellations of issues according to departmental concerns, or in order of priority, if criteria for establishing priorities can be determined.

It is advisable to set a limit of two pages per issue which, for ease of reading, should face each other. The Heading describes the category of issue and its scope — whether it is of national concern which cuts across all agency mandates, or, if it

is related only or mostly to unit or geographical location.

After this Heading is the Description. This generally covers the first page; its purpose is to describe the potential impact of the issue on the Department. The Description should clearly identify why the issue is important and the likely consequences if it is not addressed.

The next item contains the Public Position — what to say if called by the media or if speaking publicly. This is generally a condensation of the issue and the end results being sought.

Other headings include:

- ☐ **Objectives** What outcome is desired?
- ☐ **Strategies** How is the agency intended to approach the problem/ opportunity? (High profile, low profile)
- ☐ **Activities** Who will do what and when?
- ☐ **Ownership of the Issue** Who is responsible for taking the lead to ensure everything is completed on time? Who will be up to date on this issue at all times?

STEP 4 - Executive Review

Some organizations find it is appropriate to have the person ultimately responsible for the issues management process undertake a discussion with each senior manager whose area of responsibility is affected by the action plans. If they propose different approaches, these are incorporated. Generally, changes are minimal.

The final draft can be reviewed in detail with the Deputy Minister and modified to reflect his/her input. The Issues Record is then circulated to line managers and other senior personnel. A suitable interval between editions of documents such as the Issues Record is three months, although some organizations prefer monthly up-dates.

However, monthly cycles require many meetings and often events do not change that quickly. For those who have quarterly reports, individual pages describing new issues are drafted and circulated.

Conclusion

Most effective systems are simple and clear-cut. The more formal and complicated, the greater the risk of it not surviving. Many organizations have started issues management programs only to see them wither within months. The process described here has been working for several years in at least one organization. The main reason for this is that the organization has a history of being serious about facing the issues and doing something about them. Equally important, the process was not static. It changed to suit the organization's needs and it continues to change. It is essential that each organization develop its own system and help it to evolve within the organization. It is also essential to stay in tune with the external environment.

APPENDIX TWO

DISPLAYING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT DATA

Following the “completion” of a public involvement program, the team may find itself with literally volumes of material that has been generated. This could include public submissions, minutes of small group and public meetings, or responses from questionnaires. Usually, a dilemma occurs at this time. What materials do the decision-makers need to see to make an informed, intelligent decision? Ideally, this question will have been asked during the public involvement process. Several questions help to determine the extent and type of information required for the decision makers:

- ☐ How high profile is this issue?
- ☐ Who will ultimately be making the decision?
- ☐ How much time will they put aside to review the recommendations and background material?

As an example one public involvement program for Alberta's eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains resulted in the development of a two inch thick document which was sent to the Min-

ister for approval. The Minister sent it back stating that no one in Cabinet would read it and that the program results and recommendations should be summarized in no more than eight to ten pages. No one at Cabinet level has time for reading documents longer than this.

This presents a challenge for the public involvement team. How can they summarize and communicate the most important issues, responses and feelings toward these issues in ten pages? Several key considerations must be addressed in the report/summary to the decision makers.

Title: The title must be clear, succinct and describe the project exactly as the decision-makers have referred to it.

Introduction: A description of the approach taken to the project and the major issues which have been identified.

Stage of Public Involvement: Public involvement activities occur at different stages of a program or project. It must be clear to the decision-makers which stage

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is being described.

Critical Issue Description:

Only issues about decisions which must be made should be included. Issues which have been resolved in the process should not be discussed, although they can be named so that others understand that the topic is being or has been addressed and is not forgotten. Wherever possible similar formats should be used to describe the issues.

Major interest groups must be identified and the size of their organization indicated. Their position regarding each issue must be clearly stated.

Scope of Issue: For each issue, several critical points must be described.

Extent: How widespread is public interest in the issue?

Intensity: What is the level of public interest or awareness in the issue?

Duration: What is the expected duration of the activity and what type of action may be required?

Table 1 outlines the categories which have been developed in each of these areas.

Finally, it is essential to make an overall evaluation of the issue. How critical is each issue area for each of the interest groups; there-

fore how important is a response from the decision makers? One method to evaluate has been displayed in Table 2.

An example of one display developed can be found in Figures 1 and 2. As these figures illustrate, each particular issue must be displayed in no more than two pages. Again, this is essential. The two figures describe each area in terms of its importance and the type of information contained.

If the staff have incorporated this process from the initiation of a public involvement program, many of the organizational methods outlined here can be used in the data collection and analysis stages. This may provide a framework which reduces the time requirements for the overall program.

Table 1**Categories to Describe Issues****EXTENT OF ISSUE - How widespread is public interest in the issue?**

LOCAL	the question involves people living in the particular community or rural area
AREA	the question involves people living in one area of the region
REGION	the question involved people living throughout the entire region

INTENSITY - What is the level of public interest or awareness of the issue?

EMERGING	The issue is in the early stage of development. The issue has received relatively little attention, except from a small segment of the population. The widest range of options are open to the planners and residents to address the issue.
EXISTING	The issue is in an advanced stage of development with a high level of public awareness. Fewer options are open to the planners and residents.
PUBLIC CONCERN	The issue is receiving an extreme level of public awareness and public reaction is beginning to occur. Very few options are now open to the planners and residents.

DURATION - What type of action should the issue receive?

IMMEDIATE	opportunity may be limited and requires immediate attention
SHORT TERM	opportunities are greater and can be dealt with in a 1-2 year time frame
LONG TERM	multiple opportunities to address the issue in long range planning of 2-5 years

Table 2

Categories for Evaluating the Overall Issue

EVALUATION - How critical are the issues to each user group to the decision maker?

Minimal Concern the issue is of less importance to the particular user group and the planning may be long term

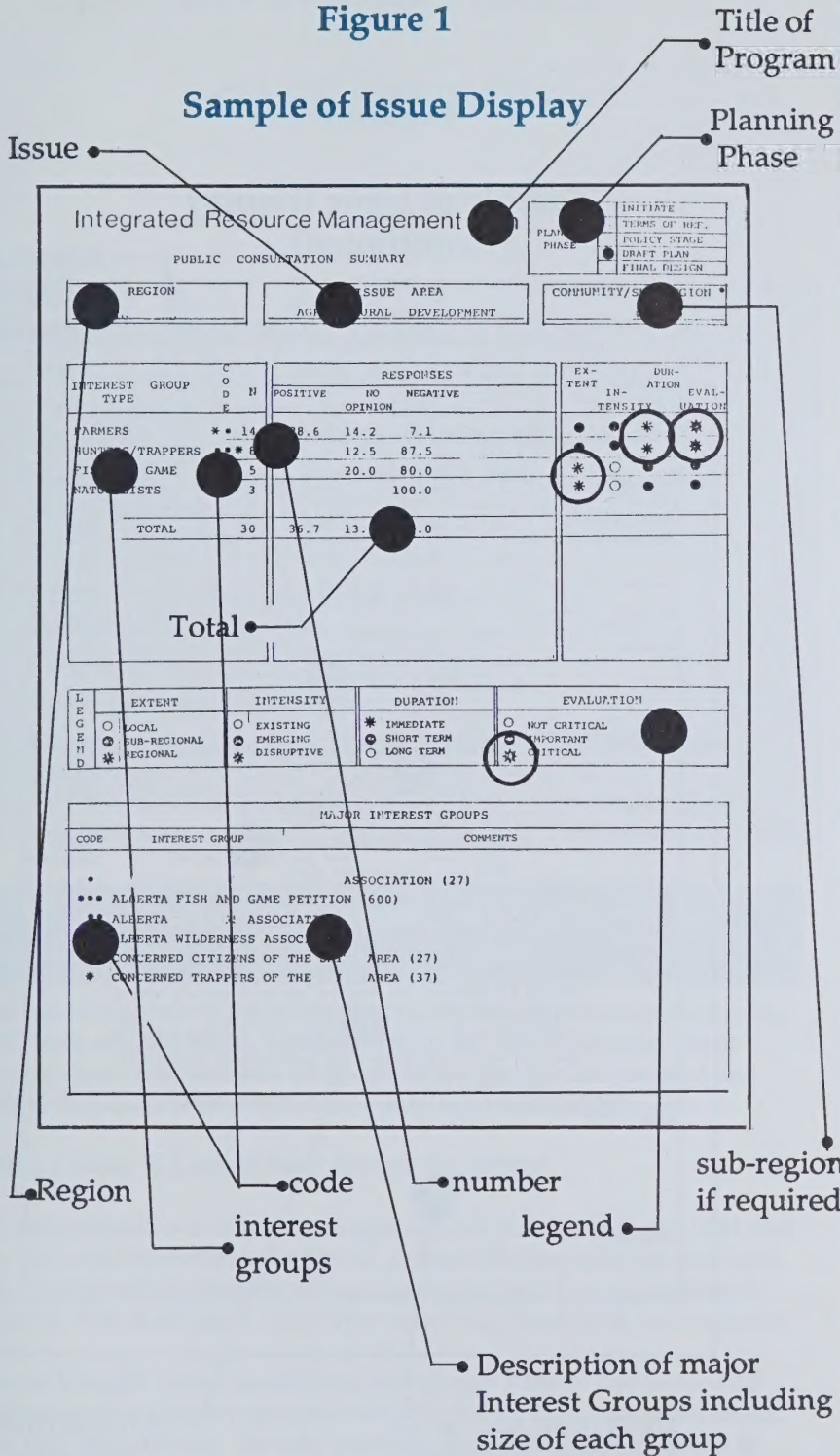
Important Issue the issue may be becoming disruptive but may still be intermediate or long term in the planning horizon

Critical-Response all indicators are critical and action is absolutely essential



Figure 1

Sample of Issue Display



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Figure 1

Sample of Issue Display
(continued)

● Representative Interest Group Comments

Integrated Resource Management Plan		PLANNING PHASE
PUBLIC CONSULTATION SUMMARY		☐ INITIATE ☐ TERMS OF REF. ☐ POLICY STAGE ☒ DRAFT PLAN ☐ FINAL DESIGN
REGION	ISSUE AREA AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT	COMMUNITY/SUB-REGION
REPRESENTATIVE INTEREST GROUP COMMENTS		
INTEREST GROUP	COMMENTS	
FARMERS	"There are so many people that want to buy land in this area for agricultural use. I think it is time it is released... "The plan is a wise and honest attempt at an interlocking type of development. "I don't see why there can't be room for both agricultural expansion and still have designated trapping areas.	
TRAPPERS	"There is still plenty of land between deeded lands and near deeded lands that isn't being used and is more suitable than running out in the middle of habitat that isn't even suitable for agricultural land. "Why push open land that will cost a fortune to open and will also put alot of young farmers in the hole....	
FISH AND GAME	"In our opinion, the area should be evaluated very closely to see if the income from this land is producing from furs and hunting to the Government with very little money spent.	
DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSE STRATEGY		
SUMMARY: This was the dominant issue in but received relatively little attention in. Anti-expansion representations far outnumbered pro statements, but these were the people adversely affected and there was obviously also strong support for agricultural expansion - for example, a pro-expansion speaker was applauded in. Anti-expansion arguments stressed impacts on lifestyles and a wide spectrum of resources, while pro-expansion statements emphasized increasing demand for agricultural land and development benefits likely to the local community. The issue has apparently divided the community.		
SHORT TERM:		
LONG TERM:		

● short term and long term responses

● Departmental Response Strategy

APPENDIX THREE

CASE STUDIES

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1. Alberta Special Waste Treatment Centre
2. Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve
3. Canadian Superior Oil - Hinton Sour Gas Well
4. Fraser River Estuary Management Program
5. National Consultation Program - Environmental Protection Act and Management of Chemicals
6. Calgary Area Aviation Master Plan
7. Bruce Peninsula National Park
8. Fort McKay Interface Committee
9. Fraser Thompson Corridor Review
10. Sand Disposal Near Steveston
11. Pest Management in Plantations: A Consultative Approach

1. Alberta Special Waste Treatment Centre - Swan Hills, Alberta

The following is abridged from an article which appeared in the Spring 1987 issue of Collections, a publication of the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation. This article outlines the background and history to the development of the waste treatment facility.

Siting a First: A Look at How Alberta Succeeded

An advertisement in Alberta newspapers one June morning in 1984 was too incredible to believe. In the ad, Town of Ryley residents criticized the Provincial Government for not putting a special waste treatment plant in their backyard. They were upset that Swan Hills had won out.

The ad brought home an amazing reality; that Alberta had succeeded where every other government authority in North America had failed. Not only was Alberta the only province or state in North America to successfully site a plant, but actually had two communities competing for it. Everywhere else authorities were struggling to get past first base, the not in my backyard syndrome (NIMBY).

The ad was also clear evidence of why the Province had succeeded, because the people, not the government, had taken it into their hands to solve the problem of where to put a hazardous waste plant.

**Alberta Special Waste
Treatment Centre -
Swan Hills, Alberta**

Dr. Walter Harris, a member of the Hazardous Waste Management Committee that started the whole process, told an environmental engineering group in Toronto that Alberta had been successful: "Because we recognized right from the start that it was a social, psychological, political problem, and not a technical one."

The consequences of choosing a site without public consideration became evident in Fort Saskatchewan in September 1979. Kinetic Contaminants of Canada Ltd. chose Fort Saskatchewan but angry residents overwhelmingly rejected it. The same kind of thing happened in Two Hills, a town 120 kilometres east.

The province then placed a moratorium on the construction of hazardous waste treatment facilities and set up a Hazardous Waste Management Committee to study the issue.

It took only four months of intensive work for the committee to issue its report: Hazardous Waste Management in Alberta. In that time they had listened to industry, government and interest group presentations, gone on a fact-finding tour to West Germany and commissioned three studies.

Key recommendations pointed to the need for:

- an integrated system to treat special wastes
- waste management facilities regulated and operated by the province
- the need for the participation of industry, other levels of government and Albertans in seeking the solution to the problem.

The public speaks

The province asked the Environment Council of Alberta (ECA) to hold information meetings and hearings across the province. More than 1,000 people attended in 16 locations and submitted 175 briefs. Based on information gathered, the ECA recommended umbrella legislation to regulate all chemicals released to the environment, including hazardous wastes, and the establishment of two consolidated treatment plants to be operated by an Alberta Crown Corporation. In its 1981 report it also called for the Minister of Environment to establish a site selection committee as soon as possible to seek out locations for treatment plants.

The Hazardous Waste Implementation Team was composed of private citizens from diverse backgrounds. Their mission was to initiate a suitable siting process that would take into consideration both technical and public acceptability criteria. To ensure public involvement, they were to sponsor extensive, frank and open discussions. To ensure an environmentally responsible approach, they were also to study the requirements of a hazardous waste system.

By the time the team was formed its support group had established siting criteria. The process, known as "constraint mapping", basically eliminated unsuitable areas of the province using physical, biological, land use or human criteria. A series of maps illustrating constraint areas province-wide was juxtaposed to show all constraints and reveal any "constraint-free areas" where a plant could be located.

Using this information the Task Force was ready to initiate its "by invitation only" public involvement program. That meant the group would not approach any community unless invited by local government or the public.

The "roadshow," as it came to be known, travelled to 65 communities. Team and Task Force members explained the constraint mapping process, showed slide-tape presentations on hazardous wastes, held open discussions on concerns, recorded those concerns and facilitated the formation of a local action committee and the nomination of a delegate to attend an October workshop.

Through information sessions conducted under the Team at first, and then under an Advisory Group when the Team disbanded in December, 1981, the province was able to educate and inform a broad base of Albertans as well as work toward the siting of a plant.

At the Provincial Workshop in October, 1981, the Team and Task Force had an excellent opportunity for intensive interaction with interested Albertans. For two days candidates, selected by residents from across the province, identified and shared concerns. Team or Alberta Environment members were called in, on the request of delegates, to probe into concern areas.

Dr. Harris calls it the single, most important activity in the entire program. "Because there was no hard sell these people worked very hard at identifying with and understanding the problem, and the majority went home convinced something had to be done and supported the province's efforts."

The final report of the Team (all private citizens) suggested the facility be privately owned and operated, but that the system be managed by a Crown corporation or agency and that the facility be located on Crown land. They recommended Alberta Environment select a suitable private sector operator and develop a short list of sites.

As a result of the public participation efforts some 52 written requests for regional assessments were received. Many municipalities felt the resultant map would be useful for such things as the location of potential landfill sites. Most never went beyond this step due to lack of interest or because there was no constraint-free land shown in the assessment.

Some locations requested further, more detailed assessments, and by the fall of 1981 exploratory drilling had taken place in Beaver, Provost and Flagstaff Counties, yielding several potential sites for more detailed hydrogeologic investigation. But local public opposition disqualified Flagstaff and another municipality just outside Edmonton, Strathcona County.

Program Redirected

That left only Beaver County in the running. The Task Force's experience there caused it to reshape its program. President Mick recalls, "As the information meetings progressed and the opposition mounted, it became clear we had underestimated the kind of opposition which siting a hazardous waste plant can elicit. The April plebiscite, which

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overwhelmingly rejected a plant there, reminded us about the sleeping giant." After Beaver County the Task Force re-examined its techniques and revamped its meeting format. Public meetings were made smaller to discourage "shouters" from overtaking meetings and the format became more structured, taking a lower key, more educational approach. "After each person spoke on their specialty they would take questions or comments. That way public input was focussed," explains Dr. Harris.

Another important change was to acknowledge the negative as well as the positive aspects of the issue and present a variety of viewpoints. Films on hazardous waste disasters, like Love Canal, were shown and more attention was addressed to establishing rapport.

The new program was launched in the towns of Ryley and Swan Hills and in the southeastern portion of Alberta, and met with great success. Plebiscites were held in all three locations which saw public acceptance in Ryley and Swan Hills. Hydrogeological investigations for both areas confirmed these as sites to be considered.

Swan Hills Named

In March, 1984, one year after the hydrogeological reports were completed, Cabinet named a location near Swan Hills as the site for the special waste facility. For the first time in North America a community had actually asked a government authority to build a hazardous waste treatment facility in their backyard.

2. Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve, Quebec

Background

Under Environment Canada, Parks policy, public consultation is described as "an essential part of the management planning process" for a park. The public is to be involved from the early stages in key decisions including preparation of park objectives, formulation of alternative park concepts, selection of a final park management plan, and amendments to the plan. In those national parks where a tradition exists for developments or use inconsistent with parks objectives, public consultation is required before any decisions are made as to the future of such uses.

Process

The Mingan Archipelago National Park planning process is a good example of the approach employed by the agency, including release of information bulletins, information meetings and open houses, receipt and analysis of public comments and establishment of working committees to resolve certain issues particular to the park, such as the use of the park lands by squatters, local hunters, and the Montagnais Indians. Consultation was provided in two parts. The first, very general, aimed at obtaining public opinion on the role of the park. This information permitted identification of problems or possible impacts on the population, and the design of a management plan. The second part focussed on the management plan.

Results

Because of the land claims process of the native peoples the Park has not yet been definitely established, but it is termed a National Park Reserve.

3. Canadian Superior Oil Ltd. Public Involvement Program Respecting A Sour Gas Well near Hinton, Alberta

Background

In early 1985 Canadian Superior Oil Ltd. (CSO) decided it wished to drill an exploratory well about 5 kilometres from Hinton to test a possible sour gas prospect. The company recognized that there would likely be serious public concerns about the proposal because of the major sour gas blowout that occurred at a drilling well in 1982 in the same general area. It decided, therefore, to conduct a carefully designed community relations program and engaged the services of a consultant specializing in community relations.

Early in the process the company established a set of guidelines or principles that became the basis for future decisions and guided it throughout the initial four month period of community contacts. It was also decided to commence the community relations process well before filing an application with Alberta's Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB), the body which must approve the drilling program.

Some of the more important principles were:

- direct contact with the community would be conducted through a few individuals;
- CSO staff would have a high profile and leadership role in all community contacts;
- records of all contacts would be maintained and circulated to all CSO staff having a role in the application process;
- Hinton community members would receive clear written information regarding the well and its risks and benefits;
- CSO would answer all questions directly, honestly and quickly; and
- CSO would not speak for any government department or the ERCB, and would direct any questions to the appropriate group.

Process

The community relations program commenced with the consultant meeting community officials to determine their preferred way of being dealt with. He advised that CSO begin the community contact process through the Town Council and from there move to other Hinton and area individuals and groups. Prior to applying for the permit, the public involvement program extended over a four month period.

Techniques

Main elements of the PI program were:

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2. Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve, Quebec

3. Canadian Superior Oil Ltd. Public Involvement Program Respecting A Sour Gas Well near Hinton, Alberta

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- ☐ preparation of an information pamphlet,
- ☐ meetings with:
 - Town Council
 - Emergency Response Planning authorities
 - all families within 12 km of the proposed well
 - organizations such as Fish and Game and Chamber of Commerce
 - government departments and agencies
 - medical and hospital officials
 - high school students
- ☐ special meetings
 - open houses for the public
 - general public meeting with invitation sent by mail to all residents of the area
- ☐ participation in the annual Hinton Trade Fair
- ☐ recording all questions raised at meetings, providing written answers and making the information available to all parties.

Results

As a result of this process, including detailed, last minute negotiations, all parties reached an agreement. All opposition to the well was withdrawn and the public hearing was cancelled. The Company proceeded with its drilling program and continued the public involvement program throughout the drilling activity.

The public involvement program for the proposed critical sour gas well was both thorough and sophisticated. It dealt with matters that were of concern to the public and had the potential of becoming major issues for the applicant, the ERCB and government departments. The process provided a win/win conclusion. The emergency response plan developed for the Hinton well has been applied to other cases. The well was drilled without incident and is currently capped as a potential well.

4. Fraser River Estuary Management Program, Lower Mainland, British Columbia

Background

The Fraser River Estuary Management Program (FREMP) was established in October 1985 through a five year Agreement among Environment Canada, B.C. Ministry of Environment, Fisheries and Oceans, the Fraser River Harbour Commission and the North Fraser Harbour Commission. The Program developed from the two-phase Fraser River Estuary Study which began in 1977 and was defined in more detail in an implementation strategy published in 1984. There was an extensive public involvement program connected with the study.

The estuary management program consists of three components - a series of goals and policies to guide planning and decision-making; a management committee to deal with issues; and program activities to improve estuary management.

Management

The management structure consists of a Management Committee with a five member executive consisting of the signatories to the Agreement and 27 members at large: 3 federal agencies, 3 provincial ministries, 3

regional districts, 12 local municipalities and 6 Indian bands.

The decision environment called for a strong public involvement program for two main reasons: the considerable public interest developed through the public program associated with the initial study phase; and the need for public input as an essential element in planning for conservation and recreation facilities and services. Given this background and the policies of public involvement of several of the signatory agencies, whether or not to involve the public was hardly a question. Public involvement plays a substantial part in decision-making, since FREMP has a mainly co-ordinating function among the main jurisdictions and interests.

Process

Objectives - One of the five management principles published in the first FREMP newsletter in March 1985 is: "To develop trust and consensus by ensuring broad consultation between all participating agencies, providing avenues for public consultation and maintaining program flexibility." A further objective of the public program is to increase awareness and knowledge about the estuary and the management program.

Approach - FREMP has promoted a consultation process from the outset, making this a featured section of its first newsletter under the caption: "Public Consultation Promoted". The first newsletter concludes: "The FREMP public consultation effort builds awareness and understanding of the issues affecting the management of the Fraser River estuary and offers the public an opportunity to interact with management agencies and influence their decisions".

A major principle underlying the public program is that of shared responsibility. The program will take the initiative to foster awareness and information about the estuary and the program and will be readily accessible to everyone interested. However, citizens and their public interest groups must take responsibility to monitor FREMP and take some initiative to seek further information and present their views. FREMP does not send all its information to every resident of the estuary, but does ensure there are ample windows for those interested to become informed and to be heard.

Techniques

- ☐ store front office
- ☐ "central project registry" - accessible to public in office and via computer/modem
- ☐ newsletter, annual report, and information booklets - eg. agency guide
- ☐ open house
- ☐ participation in conference
- ☐ talks/speeches to other organizations
- ☐ management committee accessible to individuals/organizations

Effectiveness of Techniques

The store-front office has a steady flow of calls and visitors from its various publics — municipalities, companies, interest groups and

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4. Fraser River Estuary Management Program, Lower Mainland, British Columbia

individuals.

The registry works well, and will soon be even more accessible. It is particularly valuable in "letting the public look over our shoulder."

The conference was especially helpful, even though somewhat critical, as it enabled people to talk to the senior managers of the program and increase their personal awareness of issues.

Participants in working groups are a real asset to specific FREMP projects.

The other techniques — agency guide, newsletter, open houses, displays and talks to groups — are all supplementary means of increasing awareness and information about the estuary and the program; each works well with its particular segment of the public.

Results

Positive working relationships have been successfully developed with most public interest groups and other organizations, and awareness and interest in the general public is growing.

5. National Consultation Program: Canadian Environmental Protection Act and Management of Chemicals

In March of 1987 a national consultation meeting was held with various stakeholder groups to develop consensus on the direction for a new Environmental Protection Act. A consensus building approach was employed which had previously been effectively used on a task force of industry, government, labour, environmental groups and consumers to develop a management approach to chemicals (September 1986). The following extract is taken from the background paper developed for the March 1987 meetings on the Environmental Protection Act.

Consultation Principles and Protocols

(Background Paper for National Consultation Meeting, Environmental Protection Act, March 1987)

Consultation is the method of working with key parties with an interest in an issue, with those who can support a particular course of action, influence it, implement it or oppose it. The emphasis on consultation is based on the belief that:

- a) open dialogue leads to the development of quality decisions that are understandable and acceptable to affected parties;
- b) time spent on the developmental stages of a project will reduce the time, cost, delays and disagreements at the implementation stage; and
- c) good consultation relationships support more rapid and effective cooperative responses to urgent situations.

To be effective, this requires the mobilization of all interests in society who have a stake in the issue at hand. The growing linkage between environmental and economic interests is coming to grips with achieving a modern industrial base leading simultaneously to industrial competitive advantage, environmental and health protection, and

employment opportunities. No one sector of society has the total skills and resources to achieve this objective. Ongoing consultations among the various interests are vital in order to identify opportunities for moving towards the overall objective.

Consultation allows all interested parties to obtain all relevant information, evaluate available options and related consequences and provide objectively based perspectives to each participant's decision-making. The challenge is to create new mechanisms of active, focussed cooperation among interested parties leading to an effective and credible range of actions.

Governments hold special status in consultations as they are often the decision-makers. This need not conflict with government working co-operatively with other interested parties as long as any special constraints are acknowledged early in the process. Indeed, it should be recognized that all interested parties operate within specific "political" decision-making processes. Principles and protocols for consultation are needed to protect the integrity of all parties.

In June 1985, under the leadership of the Niagara Institute, Environment Canada and its major clients/stakeholders developed a set of principles and protocols for consultations. These have been used in the design of a number of major consultations over the last two years including:

- the Task Force on the Management of Chemicals that produced the report "From Cradle to Grave: A Management Approach to Chemicals";
- the Environmental Contaminants Act Amendments Consultative Committee that produced the "Final Report of the Environmental Contaminants Act Amendments Consultative Committee";
- the Western and Northern Region Consultations on Toxic Chemicals at Banff in 1985-86;
- The State of the Environment Consultation; and
- the consultation on the Draft Environmental Protection Act.

The principles and protocols were also the focus of two workshops at the Environment Canada National Consultation Meeting in November, 1985.

A proposed code of conduct for consultations is outlined in the following section. The principles and protocols are derived from the original Niagara Process and contain additional input from the other consultation sessions. They deal with how the process of consultation should be structured, the manner in which interested parties participate, questions of resources, access to data, timing and consensus-building.

Principles of Consultation

1. There must be the capacity in Canadian society for those affected by actions of one segment or interest to have the opportunity to be informed and participate in the decisions.
2. There must be real and regular consultation involving all the interested parties who are affected by an issue or its resolution.
3. There must be a shift from confrontational approaches to a broadly based process of collaboration where interested parties, by working

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5. National Consultation Program: Canadian Environmental Protection Act and Management of Chemicals

together, define and build on common ground.

4. There must be recognition that all participants have important contributions to make and these must be actively solicited.
5. There must be access for all participants to a common information base on which to set priorities and to make decisions.
6. There must be the capacity for joint development of plans of action, including assessing performance, which respond to the needs of all interested parties.
7. There must be the recognition from all participants of the unique contribution of each participant, and this may necessitate the sharing of resources.
8. There must be regular contact maintained by participants in any consultation process with the "constituency" they represent.
9. There must be a variety of mechanisms for consultation, able to come to grips with different situations, and with sufficient stability to permit longer planning horizons by all stakeholders.

Protocols of Consultation

Process and Participants

1. Consultations may be initiated by any participant affected by an issue.
2. There should be, wherever possible, prior consultation on the process itself.
3. Consultations require at the outset a clear statement of the issue to be addressed, objectives for the consultation and any constraints on the consultation. These should be clearly set forth and recognized by all participants in advance.
4. Consultations should be tailored to the specific objective of the exercise and the mandate and role and responsibilities of the stakeholders involved.
5. There should be an absence of pre-determined, non-negotiable solutions.
6. When the results of consultations require legislative implementation, participants should clearly understand how their efforts will fit into any existing regulatory or legislative process.
7. Consultations must accommodate representatives of all the interests directly affected by an issue and its resolution.
8. Consultations must recognize and accommodate all participants' interests, either by improving decisions affecting them or by explaining the rationale underlying the decisions.
9. Participants should be consulted at an early stage in the process while options are still open.
10. Participants must clearly understand and present the positions of the interests they represent.
11. Participants must be committed to seeking, as far as possible, the constructive integration of all viewpoints, not simply the advocacy of narrow interests.

Etiquette

12. Consultations must be motivated by genuine desire and commitment to obtain and consider the views received.
13. There must be mutual respect for the legitimacy and point of view of all participants.
14. Consultation must be focussed at a meaningful level, deal with real

issues, and justify itself by concrete results and real value to participants.

15. The consultation process must be viewed as ongoing, as tangible evidence of mutuality and interdependence of stakeholder interests.

16. The process must enhance the building of trust among participants, including clarifying values, building a common information base, developing norms for cooperation and applying these to specific problems.

Resources, Data and Timing

17. Consultation processes require adequate commitment of time and resources from the outset.

18. The time frame for consultation must seek a balance between the time constraints on all parties.

19. All parties must have reasonable access to all relevant information, on a timely basis.

20. Emergency situations lack the luxury of time, but it should be recognized that a strong on-going consultation effort will ensure a cooperative base for responses when emergency situations do arise.

Consensus Building

21. Consultations should seek common ground and build on it.

22. Solutions should be developed through consensus where all stakeholders have equal opportunity to present their views and be heard in the context of the consensus building process.

23. Consensus building requires compromise and flexibility from all participants; a strong consensus implies that participants have rallied to the best possible solution within a wide range of constraints and aspirations.

24. Participants expect feedback from other participants clearly explaining the basis for any decisions which are taken.

The use of these principles and protocols was effectively demonstrated in the process respecting the management of chemicals. A task force representing large chemical manufacturing companies and industry associations, national and provincial environmental groups, federal and provincial governments and labour and consumer groups developed a "cradle-to-grave" approach to managing chemicals through a consultative process.

The consultative process lasted over six months, and was characterized by:

- Fifteen members on the task force, each representing his/her own stakeholder constituency and committed to exploring areas of agreement/disagreement, transmitting the concerns of their constituency in their Task Force meetings and in turn communicating back with the constituency.

- A neutral facilitator (the Niagara Institute) and the recording of proceedings by the same agency.

- Meetings in both plenary and smaller working groups.

- Presentation of background papers from constituency organizations.

-Use of brainstorming and creative writing techniques.

-Considerable time devoted by individual members to communicating with their own constituencies.

Results

The Steering Committee met monthly, held three major workshops, and sponsored four task forces which had an average of four meetings each, and produced a set of task force recommendations approved in the final plenary meeting. The process produced consensus on measures for improving consultation processes and for application of those processes to a number of high priority issues in a manner likely to achieve both environmental and economic objectives. While the project contract was officially terminated with the final plenary meeting, two new task forces were created which will be carried on as separate projects, and various stakeholder groups have initiated other formal and informal activities consistent with the project's recommendations.

6. Calgary Area Aviation Master Plan, Calgary, Alberta

Background

The primary objective of the Calgary Area Aviation Master Plan (CAAMP) was to analyze the needs of the system and recommend how to meet its long term requirements. Key problems identified were: runway deficiencies, too broad an aircraft mix, neighbourhood noise impacts, and costs.

The Calgary International Airport had been experiencing rapid growth in aircraft traffic; relationships between airlines and airport tenants with airport management had become strained through a number of specific operational concerns.

Management

While strictly advisory in nature, public consultation was an integral part of this planning process. The main public consultation program was designed in November 1984 and implemented during the spring of 1985.

Process

The two primary objectives of the process were:

- ☐ to enable organizational representatives to become more informed about the airport situation, the issues, the needs of the various parties, alternative solutions available and the criteria for selecting among them.
- ☐ to enable the participants to work with each other and with Transport Canada to develop a technically sound and economically attractive solution (including the accommodation of general aviation aircraft) which would be generally understood and accepted by most of those affected by it so that the needs of the larger community could be met.

Techniques

- initial informal meetings to identify interests, perspectives
- social profile of the City of Calgary and the area's aviation community
- series of planning workshops with about 20 participants each, each with a different purpose related to the planning process

Effectiveness of Techniques

The social profile provided the essential data base on which to plan and manage the workshops; its necessary frankness about airport-community relations generated some initial static.

The workshops were rated favorably by both TC and other participants. The achievement of consensus on a final recommendation was a tribute to the hard work and commitment of the various parties; it was also unexpected and unnecessary. While consensus is ideal, workable compromises which have the informed and visible support of a substantial majority of the participants will usually suffice.

The minutes of the meetings were detailed and highly technical, but they were an essential part of the process, not only for use by the participants but so the participants could consult with their colleagues, such as executive members of organizations.

The summary statement distributed by most organizations to their members avoided a variety of interpretations about what was done and the final recommendation.

Results

The working relationship between the various parties improved and should contribute to ongoing operating activities.

The group reached a consensus agreement on a strategy to recommend, and this recommendation was later approved by the executives of the organizations involved.

7. Bruce Peninsula National Park, Ontario

Background

In 1981, the northern Bruce Peninsula in Ontario was identified and selected by Environment Canada, Parks as a natural area of Canadian significance and a potential national park area. In September 1981 the federal agency began a process of publicly examining the feasibility of establishing a national park on the Bruce Peninsula.

Process

In the following two years, Environment Canada, Parks carried out a public consultation program in the affected townships which resulted in a "well informed and exceptionally well-represented public". By 1984 the following had taken place:

- establishment of a store-front office

6. Calgary Area Aviation Master Plan, Calgary, Alberta

7. Bruce Peninsula Na- tional Park, Ontario

- mailing of an information package to each ratepayer
- establishment of a joint committee with representatives from the two townships to determine the views of local residents
- continued mailouts to residents
- twelve open houses

Results

The final agreement with the Ontario Government to create the national park was signed in 1987.

8. Fort McKay Interface Committee, Alberta

The Fort McKay Interface Committee was formed at the initiative of Alberta's energy industry regulatory agency, the ERCB (Energy Resources Conservation Board). The purpose of the committee was to improve communication among industry, government and community officials with respect to oil sands activities, environmental and community development issues in Fort McKay, a primarily native community.

1984 Application by Syncrude

In 1984 syncrude applied to the ERCB for approval to increase the capacity of its plant at Fort McKay, Alberta. Because of opposition from the community of Fort McKay, the ERCB convened a public hearing. The hearing was extremely adversarial. The Fort McKay Band contended that oil sands operations were having terrible effects on the community — their lifestyle had been destroyed and their health was in jeopardy. The applicant contended that actual impacts were minimal and well within reasonable standards as demonstrated by extensive research programs.

The ERCB granted the application, but was concerned about the major differences in views between the Band and the oil sands operators. It decided that special efforts should be made to find the true facts and correct any outstanding problems. It believed that inadequate communication between the parties was a major cause of the problems and that an effective public involvement program should be implemented as soon as possible.

Public Involvement Program

The ERCB believed that the most effective PI program would be the establishment of a community/industry/government committee. Because of the sensitivity of the issues and the divisiveness of previous media exchanges, the ERCB decided it would only be successful if it had the support of senior officers for each of the parties. Therefore, support was sought from the Chief of the Band, the Presidents of the two companies and the Deputy Ministers of affected government departments. All supported the approach and agreed to appoint senior representatives to the founding committee. An independent chairman was appointed, and the Band was provided with funding for an expert in environmental matters and a solicitor.

At the first meeting of the committee, in September 1985, the Band proposed agenda items that were almost all socio-economic matters

rather than the environmental/health issues that had been the impetus for the Committee. However, the issues were clearly of major concern to the community and Committee members accepted them. Because the representatives from industry and government had responsible positions and substantial authority they were able to provide both advice and assistance in dealing with the specific issues being discussed.

Socio-economic issues included the installation of water supply and sewage systems for Fort McKay, as well as the construction of a multi-use community centre. Environmental issues were added to the agenda, and a Community Environmental Education Committee was established, funded by the two oil sands companies. Other activities in the area are being addressed, including reclamation of mined areas and community environmental education.

Syncrude's Application for a New Mining Area

When Syncrude applied to the ERCB for a new 25-year mining area in October 1985, careful consideration was given to how the application should be reviewed. The Interface Committee meetings had been initiated only a few weeks previously and the ERCB was concerned that its normal review process would result in an adversarial hearing which could jeopardize the new co-operative approach. Therefore, it decided to ask the Band whether it would be interested in experimenting with a new review process that would be complementary to the co-operative philosophy of the Interface Committee. The proposal was:

- ☐ to establish an Application Review Committee with representatives from the community, the applicant, affected government departments and the ERCB;
- ☐ in order to permit the community to fully participate in the Committee, the ERCB agreed to fund the services of experts;
- ☐ the Committee would meet and review the application jointly with each party identifying any concerns, with the applicant providing answers;
- ☐ if the review process resolved all of the issues and concerns, the ERCB would issue its approval;
- ☐ if the parties could not resolve a specific issue or concern, the ERCB would appoint a Board panel and convene a hearing to consider that specific issue. Its decision would be made in the normal manner.

All involved parties agreed to the ERCB's proposal, the committee met and reached agreement on the project, and approval was granted to Syncrude. Syncrude estimated that by avoiding a public hearing it had saved \$200,000.

Assessment of the Public Involvement Program

1. It has been demonstrated that parties with different objectives can work together co-operatively for their mutual benefit.

- ☐ the Community has achieved significant benefits in only two years, whereas prior to 1985 its confrontational approach had produced nothing but headlines and media publicity.

8. Fort McKay Interface Committee, Alberta

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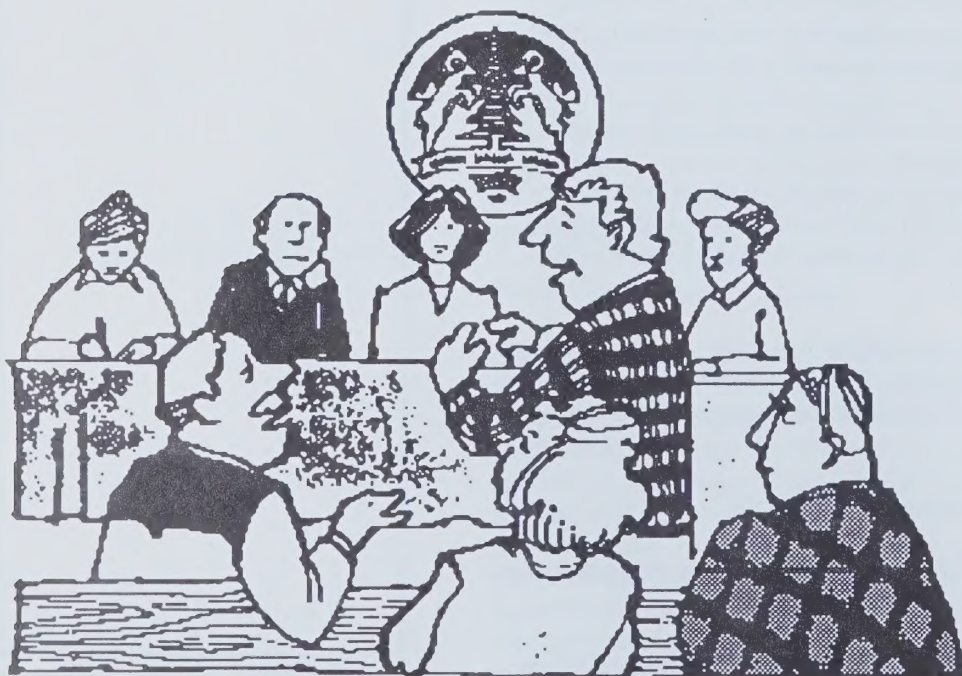
- ❑ the companies have discovered a new way of introducing proposed changes, which is constructive and efficient.
- ❑ government departments and agencies have been able to adopt a more sympathetic and creative approach to problem solving in the co-operative committee environment which was much more difficult, if not impossible, during the confrontational regime.

2. The process has resulted in win/win conclusions as compared to the previous win/lose results that followed from an adversarial public hearing. It is important to recognize that because the legislation provides for a public hearing, it creates an incentive for the applicant to participate in a co-operative program and it permits the community to participate, knowing that if the outcome is not satisfactory, it can still request a hearing. This balancing of incentives ensures serious co-operative efforts.

3. The environmental/health concerns are being examined on a co-operative basis and the major differences between the parties are gradually being reduced. Industry and government now agree that there are odour problems that should be corrected and the community is becoming aware that monitoring shows much lower impacts than they previously believed.

4. The process is fragile because the parties have their own objectives and sometimes the actions of one party conflicts with the objectives of another party.

5. The success of PI programs inevitably depends to a significant extent on the personal rapport and trust of the various parties. If trust, respect and sympathy are not present, PI will not succeed. Therefore, careful selection of the participating members is crucial.



9. Fraser-Thompson Corridor Review, British Columbia

Background

The Fraser Thompson (F-T) Corridor extends from Chilliwack to the Alberta border and encompasses some 100,000 people in a dozen communities plus a further 3,000 people on 60-70 occupied Indian reserves. The corridor contains the main CNR line, the Trans-Canada and Yellowhead Highways, three oil and gas pipelines, and B.C. Hydro's high voltage transmission towers.

Between early 1984 and January 1986 the Federal Environment Assessment Review Office (FEARO) conducted an environmental planning review of all transportation activities in the F-T corridor. This project was triggered by the CNR Twin Tracking review and was carried out by its Panel. However, the F-T Corridor was quite distinct and separate from the CNR project.

Management

The decision environment was conditioned by a number of factors: public involvement is an integral part of FEARO's mandate and operating style, the experience with the CNR Twin Tracking Review indicated that other issues in the corridor needed to be dealt with and there was strong public interest and support in the corridor for this further review. Input from government agencies and many interest groups (environmental, recreational, fish and wildlife) played a significant role in shaping the final recommendations of the Panel, as did the positions taken by the Alliance of Tribal Councils and their member councils and bands.

Process

Objectives

- to identify public concerns about transportation development and resource use
- to establish a management regime for future transportation activities, including opportunities for public involvement.

Approaches

A basically consultative approach was taken by inviting a broad range of participants from government, transportation, public groups and Indian bands to participate.

Techniques

- a tabloid publication was developed and widely distributed to describe the situation and invite people to contribute their ideas and suggestions.
- the principal technique employed was the workshop. The first cycle was held in the communities of Vancouver, Lytton and Kamloops during March 1985. The basic agenda was an outline of the situation followed by a round table discussion guided by the participants, including Panel members. Attendance ranged from 15 to 40; most workshops lasted most of the day. Participants were recruited by specific invitations to known stake-holders, a broad mailing list and the

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9. Fraser-Thompson Corridor Review, British Columbia

local newspaper. The Panel chairman provided some general direction to the discussion. In the largest workshop, the group was divided into sub-groups to provide participants with more air-time, even though this format is a little cumbersome to operate.

□ a discussion paper was prepared after the first set of workshops and was distributed before the second series which occurred in June at the same locations and with largely the same participants.

□ informal consultation took place through many one-on-one telephone conversations with participants between the two series of workshops; while time-consuming, this was most important.

Effectiveness of Techniques

The tabloid, the workshops and the informal consultation techniques were all highly effective. The tabloid drew on technical material prepared on the corridor by a consultant before the public program commenced.

Results

The Panel identified a number of problems and deficiencies in the current government procedures for environmental planning and management of corridor transportation activities. It recommended the creation of an amended system which would provide for increased opportunities for public involvement. Feedback from the participants was very positive. In addition, there was much positive spillover among the participants on their own agendas; gaps which had developed between organizations over the years were repaired.

10. Sand Disposal Near Steveston, British Columbia

Background

The Fraser River Harbour Commission dredges over half a million cubic metres of sand a year from the Fraser River to maintain the waterway. When its usual disposal site was sold to become a park, the Commission piled rip-rap around a low sandy island in the river and dumped sand on it for a total cost of \$800,000. The Commission proposed to build a bridge to the island and truck the sand off to commercial users. At this point, strong opposition developed from a number of interests in the adjacent community of Steveston.

Management

Public Involvement was introduced for several reasons. The concerned people took the initiative and created an embarrassing public protest, federal government policies favoured this approach and at least one Commissioner was supportive of a consultative process.

This project took place between May and October, 1983.

Process

Objectives

- to find a publicly acceptable means of disposing of dredged sand
- to restore harmonious relationships between the Commission and the community.

Approaches

While a consultative approach was taken with the leaders of community interest groups, soliciting from them suggestions about solutions for the problem, an information-feedback approach was used with the general public. It outlined six alternative solutions and invited them to choose one and say why.

Techniques

A social profile was prepared of Steveston to identify the character of the community, describe its various groups and leaders, discover its formal and informal communication channels, and find out people's knowledge of and attitudes to the Commission and its sand disposal project.

A planning workshop with group leaders was held to explore the situation and develop alternative solutions for the problem. A dozen groups were represented together with four federal agencies - the Commission, Public Works Canada, Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard.

Next, a flyer was prepared and distributed as an insert in the local newspaper and as a poster in public places. It described the situation and the Commission's problem, outlined six alternative solutions, recognized six concerns raised by local residents, advertised an open house for the following week and solicited readers' views through a tear-off coupon.

The Open House enabled a number of people to obtain further information about the project and to talk with the Commission and its staff directly.

A concluding open house with the same group leaders and agency personnel was preceded by a harbour tour which enable all to increase their appreciation of the situation facing the Commission.

Effectiveness of Techniques

The Social profile provided a useful overview of the community and disclosed a substantially positive attitude towards the Commission except for this one problem. During interviewing for the profile, trust and credibility was developed so that there was a good response to invitations to the planning workshop.

The first planning workshop established the foundation for a joint problem-solving process and ensured that each participant had the same basic data base about the situation and understood the views of each other.

The flyer gave the general public the main points in the issue and provided all with an easy opportunity to respond; 14 mailed in coupons which was rather less than anticipated.

The Open House attracted some 60 people and resulted in free-flowing conversations during visits which averaged an hour in length; 39 people completed the checklist provided.

10. Sand Disposal Near Steveston, British Columbia

The second planning workshop, following the informative harbour tour, led one participant to propose a six point solution which was acceptable to the four federal agency representatives and to all 12 of the interest group representatives.

The total cost of this consultation process was \$34,000.

Results

The program enabled the Commission to identify a generally acceptable method of sand disposal and also restored good relationships between itself and the community.

11. Pest Management in Plantations: A Consultative Approach, New Brunswick

This project was not described by the participants as a win-win exercise. Those contacted agreed that it failed to achieve its public involvement objective, which was to develop a consultative process for the resolution of issues, the development of consensus, and the enhancement of communication among key stakeholders.

Background

In the summer of 1984 representatives of federal and provincial departments in New Brunswick, and industry, met to discuss conflict resolution with respect to pest management in the Maritimes. It was decided to establish a Steering Committee to undertake further analysis and recommend how to proceed. The Committee included representatives of the above groups and of other government agencies.

Process

A pilot exercise was undertaken using the Adaptive Environmental Assessment and Management (AEAM) approach for conflict resolution and consensus building, to address the specific issue of pest management in tree plantations.

After initial discussions the objectives of the pilot study were established as:

- (i) to develop a consultative process for the resolution of issues related to the management of plantations and pests associated with plantations;
- (ii) to develop consensus and enhance communications between key stakeholders in forest plantation management, and;
- (iii) to develop a management-oriented model of the spruce budmoth/spruce forest ecosystem as a case study example of pest management in plantations.

Techniques

In attempting to achieve these objectives a four stage exercise was

undertaken, including an AEAM modelling workshop on the specific issue of plantation pest management, a literature review, a second workshop to design a consultative process for addressing the issue, and an institutional analysis. A wide range of interest groups were involved in each workshop which were held in July and November 1985 respectively.

Outcome

While there was a useful exchange between the representatives of industry, governments, research agencies and academics, conflict between various of these groups and public interest groups (particularly the Ecology Action Centre) was renewed and, if anything, further entrenched. There is little to suggest that the consultative process developed would be any more useful were it to be used to address other forestry issues. There is a need for a longer-term program of consultation and consensus building and lower levels of expectation for the successful short-term resolution of highly contentious issues.

The project is included in the manual for the lessons which can be learned from its difficulties. While a number of reasons were suggested for the outcome of the process, they seem to coalesce around the following:

1. The issue was highly contentious (pest management in forest plantations) and the positions of the various groups were already well entrenched. Developing mutual trust and understanding given this volatile a situation is necessarily a long term process.
2. The terms of reference of the study were broad and vague, and the issue consequently was difficult to meaningfully deal with. In retrospect some of the participants thought that it would have been better to have selected a smaller topic on which there was more specific information, and which had not yet generated entrenched positions.
3. The last problem area contributing to the project's difficulties involved the issue of representativeness, especially of the members of the public interest groups represented on the study. To the degree that they became sympathetic to aspects of the process they were thought by some other group members to have been co-opted. This problem illustrates the essential need for representatives to have close and continuing contact with the constituencies they represent.

11. Pest Management in Plantations: A Consultative Approach, New Brunswick

CA1 EP 60088M02

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MANUAL ON PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT: PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING PUBLIC
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